A phenomenological study of experiences in blended librarianship among academic librarians in Zimbabwe with special reference to selected higher education institutions

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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DEDICATION

To my wife Aggie and our babies!

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory phenomenological study served the purpose of investigating the phenomenon of the Zimbabwean academic librarian whose professional identity has been evolving into Bell and Shank's (2007) blended librarianship over the past decade. The primary objective of this study was to explore the shared experiences of blended librarianship to find out how effectively Zimbabwean academic librarians adhere to their dynamic roles and functions, and how they are perceived in the university. To achieve the primary goal, the study was framed using the theoretical constructs from Lave and Wenger's (1991) Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) and Communities of Practice (CoP), to understand how academic librarians learnt in the workplace through involvement in authentic work tasks.

The research methodology relied on Heidegger's Interpretive Phenomenology Analysis and the philosophy of interpretivism. The researcher looked for the academic librarian's experiences of blended librarianship and then made sense of the academic librarian's interpretation, to draw out a common meaning of blended librarianship. The researcher collected data from a calculated sample of 101 academic librarians from non-professional roles to Library Board level. Data collected was triangulated using multiple methods of data collection that included a semi-structured questionnaire, document research and semi-structured interviews. Data was collected from academic librarians from the Bindura State University of Education, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Lupane State University, Midlands State University, the National University of Science and Technology, and PHSBL80 University which was anonymised. Though blended librarianship had been adopted in different academic libraries through various ways that account for the socio-cultural and historical issues in each academic library, it can be concluded that blended librarianship may bridge the theory-practice divide. The study recommends academic libraries to move towards integrating the teaching of Information Literacy Skills (ILS) and Low Threshold Technologies Applications (LTAs) into the courses that are taught by lecturers. This is set to place academic librarians within the context of their community, where they can contribute "legitimately" as equals, rather than working at the periphery of the classroom where they have a subservient role as seen in the study.

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ACRONYMS

ACRL	Association of College & Research Libraries
ADDIE	Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation
AL	Assistant Librarian
ALA	American Library Association
ARL	Association of Research Libraries
BLAAM	Blended Librarians Adapted ADDIE Model
BUSE	Bindura University of Science Education
CILIP	Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
CLAs	Chief Library Assistants
CoP	Communities of Practice
CUT	Chinhoyi University of Technology
eLMS	Electronic Learning Management System
ICTs	Information Communication Technologies
ILS	Information Literacy Skills
LAs	Library Assistants
LIS	Library and Information Science
LPP	Legitimate Peripheral Participation
LSU	Lupane State University
LTA	Low Threshold Application
MSc. LIS	Masters in Library and Information Science
MSU	Midlands State University
NUST	National University of Science and Technology
SL	Systems Librarian
SLAs	Senior Library Assistants
TA	Technical Assistant
TL	Technology Librarian
UCT	University of Cape Town
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
ZimLA	Zimbabwe Library Association
ZULC	Zimbabwe University Libraries' Consortium

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study sought to explore the phenomenon of academic librarians whose professional identity has been evolving into blended librarianship in their institutional work. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore, with a sample of Zimbabwean academic librarians, how their institutional work, interpretive repertoires, roles and functions have transformed to blended librarianship. The researcher assumed that the knowledge that can be obtained in this study may contribute to reducing the theory-practice-divide in the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession and uncover the philosophical issues that have built academic librarianship in Zimbabwe. The researcher relied on the qualitative phenomenological research tradition to collect narrative accounts from academic librarians. The academic librarians who participated in the study were carefully selected from state universities.

1.2 Background to the study

Globally, there is an accepted view that the role of a university librarian, (often referred to as an academic librarian) has been changing since the 1980s, and now includes blended roles which comprise elements of both professional and academic domains (Corrall, 2010: 569-571). During and after the 1980s, the world witnessed an unprecedented growth in the Digital Revolution and the Information Society. These developments have altered the practices of academic librarians' jobs and the organisational structures in academic libraries (Minishi-Majanja, 2007; Minishi-Majanja and Kiplang'at, 2013; Chikonzo et al., 2014; Chanetsa and Ngulube, 2016).

Academic librarians are increasingly becoming blended librarians (that is, having blurred roles which cut across both academic and non-academic boundaries) because they are

applying their traditional skills of information provision in information technology and instructional design (Whitchurch, 2008, 2009). That is why academic librarians have different job titles such as Subject Librarian, Liaison Librarian, Information Advisor or Learning Support Librarian, amongst others (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, 2014; Chanetsa and Ngulube, 2016: 155), which signifies the merger of their traditional non-academic roles with the newer academic functions.

Although sub-Saharan African countries are also experiencing changes in the Digital Revolution and the Information Society, their academic libraries are not adequately prepared to practise blended librarianship because the LIS schools are not producing graduates who are ready to fit into the demands of higher education institutions (Minishi-Majanja, 2007: 10; Munyoro, 2014: 206). There is some research which has found that novice Zimbabwean academic librarians are not prepared for 'blended roles' because they lack requisite skills upon graduating and in their subsequent recruitment (Pasipamire, 2012; Munyoro, 2014), and therefore need to develop their skills while on the job (Mavodza, 2014: 99).

The gap between novice and practising academic librarians has been widened by the paradigm shift from apprenticeships in academic libraries to the establishment of formal training in institutions of higher education (Cossette, 2009: 18-22). Although some studies have recognised a theory-practice-divide amongst Zimbabwean LIS educators and professionals (Pasipamire, 2012; Munyoro, 2014), the perspective from the institutional work of novice and practising academic librarians has been missing in these studies. Therefore, there was a need to study how novice and practising academic librarians are experiencing the changes in their roles, identity and functions to become blended librarians. The theory-practice-divide in the context of this study is the gap between the knowledge and skills of novice and practising academic librarians.

Therefore, the study viewed the theory-practice-divide in LIS at higher education institutions through the lens of the institutional work of practising academic librarians, following a suggestion that is made by Crowley (2005: 3-4) that there are different

subcultures that exist within and outside a university and each subculture must be understood within its own context.

The researcher's approach to focus on the theory-practice-divide in Zimbabwean librarianship amongst novice and practising academic librarians is not a widely accepted view as it is rarely found in the literature. The researcher's assertion was that most local (Zimbabwe) studies (Mavodza and Maenzanise, 2012; Pasipamire, 2012; Munyoro, 2014; Mavodza, 2014) on the theory-practice-divide in LIS follow the rational choice perspective. The assumption made by these local studies is that graduates in librarianship will bridge the theory-practice-divide if their curricula change (Mavodza and Maenzanise, 2012; Pasipamire, 2012; Munyoro, 2014) and that LIS graduates will fit into prospective jobs if their reputation and status are widely respected (Hadebe, 1994; Mbambo, 2006; Mavodza, 2014). Though there is a sound rationale with this motive, there is little information that relates to the socio-cultural processes that facilitate the academic library's professionals to adjust into the dynamic environment of the Zimbabwean academic library and university life.

For example, novice academic librarians in Zimbabwe might encounter challenges when adjusting into this professional identity of blended librarianship because LIS schools do not train students to work in specific types of libraries such as academic libraries (Mavodza, 2014: 98). Although she does not say so directly, Mavodza (2014: 97) also implies that academic librarians with poor skills for the blended roles may eventually falter in institutional work and thus further the theory-practice-divide.

The researcher's framing of the theory-practice divide within the context of practising academic librarians is also consistent with the work of Nassimbeni (1988: 52), Sare, Bales and Neville (2012: 180) and Sare and Edward Bales (2014: 577). These authors suggest that the academic library's professionals transcend from novices to experts through a socialisation process that continues throughout their career and this socialization process is tied up with increasing competence, knowledge and skills. The socialisation process

that is noted here is called a professional identity (Nassimbeni, 1988; Sare, Bales and Neville, 2012; Sare and Edward Bales, 2014).

Slay and Smith (2011: 87) define a professional identity as a social construction formed through membership in a profession, which in turn influences self-definition and shapes how others within and outside the profession think about the individual. For novice academic librarians, the LIS school is the first place where their professional identity is constructed, through the teaching of courses that support the goals of librarianship (Nassimbeni, 1988: 50). Since academic librarians often operate in a fast-paced environment, novices have to adjust their professional identity into specific contexts to become experts (Matteson, 2008: 11). In general, academic librarians are individuals who constantly revise and renegotiate their professional identity to suit the changes that are taking place at their institutions. Therefore, blended librarianship has been borne out of the different paradigms that have been accepted by the academic library and socialisation has made it possible for academic librarians to practice blended librarianship (see Section 3.2.2).

Therefore, Lave and Wenger's (1991) Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP), which is discussed in Chapter 2, was used in the study to provide an invaluable theoretical framework to study the institutional work of academic librarians. LPP discusses how the mastery of skills and the professional identity of an individual are gained through participating in the subculture's socialisation processes.

In framing this study's context, the researcher also acknowledged Pfumbidzai (2011) and Pasipamire's (2012) findings as they both observed that Zimbabwe's academic libraries might lack infrastructure (adequate library spaces) and equipment (computer hardware and software) to facilitate the application of the novice academic librarians' skill-sets when straddling between their professional identity constructed at the LIS school and blended librarian identity constructed at the workplace. As a result, LIS schools should actively collaborate and partner with practitioners in the construction of the professional

identity of LIS graduates, not only through situated learning but also by integrating their institutional work with that of the academic library (Raju and Thomas, 2013).

It is, therefore, germane that the university library must create a conducive working environment that encourages academic librarians to construct their professional identities (Mugwisi and Ocholla, 2003: 199-200). The researcher also observed that the academic library is a 'centre' within which practitioners can straddle theory and practice in the delivery of services to the user communities of their parent institutions.

1.2.1 Contextual background

Pasipamire (2015: 63) observed that Zimbabwe's higher education and tertiary sector comprises of 16 universities and a combination of 21 polytechnics, and teacher training colleges. As a prerequisite for the establishment, development and advancement of knowledge, the universities and colleges in Zimbabwe all have an academic library (Government of Zimbabwe, 2006; Garwe, 2014).

The literature reviewed has established that the concept of blended librarianship is still in infancy amongst Zimbabwean academic librarians as there are tell-tale signs of its partial existence here and there, but it is not entirely accepted and practised (Chanetsa, 2014: 157-281). Recent studies by Mbambo (2006), Chikonzo et al. (2014), Chanetsa (2014), Pasipamire (2015) and Chanetsa and Ngulube (2016) have been identified as the studies that address some of the issues of blended librarianship.

For instance, Mbambo (2006: 184) decried the lack of formal partnerships between academic libraries and faculties in Zimbabwe, giving an example of faculty librarianship which at the time of her writing was not yet recognised in some universities. Mbambo (2006: 184) highlighted her observation that faculty librarianship is an internal arrangement of job responsibilities negotiated between the academic library and the teaching faculties. In the same vein, Chikonzo et al. (2014: 108) strengthened Mbambo's (2006: 184) observation by providing empirical evidence that the formal job descriptions of academic librarians in higher education institutions in Zimbabwe did not reflect some

of the emerging blended roles and responsibilities that academic librarians were practising.

Although there is evidence that the job responsibilities of Zimbabwean academic librarians are encompassing blended roles, researchers like Pasipamire (2015) and Govo (2015) have shown that academic librarians are not coping with these emergent responsibilities. Pasipamire (2015: 64) found that Zimbabwean academic librarians were struggling to fit the teaching, learning and research part of their job responsibilities fully, and concentrated on merely providing collections and assisting in information discovery. Pasipamire (2015: 64) went further on and established that Zimbabwean academic librarians did not have adequate skills to practice their teaching roles and that they did not receive sufficient support from faculty and their parent institutions.

Furthermore, Govo (2015) highlighted the perception of the academic librarian from the perspective of faculty, in this case, the LIS teaching department at a Zimbabwean university. Govo (2015) found that academic librarians were presented as lacking customer care, marketing and research skills, among others. Govo (2015: 61-62) proposed that Zimbabwean academic librarians, in general, should be proactive when engaging teaching departments such as LIS, among others, because faculty[1] do not frequently use library services.

For the blended roles of academic librarians to be effective, Corrall (2010: 571) proposes that a proactive academic library should partner with academic departments and faculties which must provide support to the academic library's services. A partnership between the faculties and the academic library will ensure that novice and practising academic librarians have the same knowledge and skill sets (Corrall, 2010). However, Munyoro (2014) has complained that there is a gap in the Zimbabwean studies that attempt to explore the collaboration between faculties and academic libraries in shaping the professional identity of academic librarians. Therefore, Munyoro (2014) suggests that

[1] In the context of Zimbabwe, 'faculty' is usually used to refer to academics. Hence this study, which reflects on Zimbabwean experiences, uses the word 'faculty' to refer to academics.

there should be a study that will raise awareness about building collaborative synergies between faculty and academic librarians. He also suggests that there should be a study that investigates how these mutual synergies can improve the quality of teaching and learning, research, community engagement, and the allocation of equitable access to learning tools.

Albeit the above studies indicate that the role of the Zimbabwean academic librarian is changing into a blended identity, there is a gap in studies that attempt to understand blended librarianship from the experiences of academic librarians. By studying the experiences of academic librarians, the researcher can learn and understand how this blended identity is constructed and negotiated within the politics of the institutional work in higher education institutions in Zimbabwe. The blended librarianship that was used in this study follows proposals made by Bell and Shank (2004) and Bell and Shank (2007) as they cut across the dimensions of the practitioner's institutional work and that of the faculty through the combination of pedagogic skills, information technology, and traditional librarianship.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Research has found that Zimbabwean academic librarians are now combining both academic and professional roles, and are now taking on new responsibilities that are beyond their formalised job descriptions (Chikonzo et al., 2014). There is now an increasing global demand for academic librarians to alternate between both academic and non-academic roles and responsibilities to take advantage of the new technologies used in teaching, learning and research (Whitchurch, 2009; Vassilakaki and Moniarou-Papaconstantinou, 2015). However, contemporary empirical evidence so far suggests that Zimbabwean academic librarians have been ineffective in combining both academic and professional roles as they seem to be concentrating more of their efforts on traditional professional roles and responsibilities (Munyoro, 2014; Govo, 2015; Pasipamire, 2015).

Perhaps academic librarians tend to experience identity dilemmas when their professional identity changed from non-academic to quasi-academic roles, due to the lack of

recognition that they are receiving from the communities they serve both, faculty and students (Polger and Okamoto, 2010). Academic librarians have been marginalised in higher education institutions, because they tend to occupy a position peripherally to the faculty's network of communication, because academic librarians do not have firsthand contact with students and teaching colleagues (Tumbleson and Burke, 2009, 2016). Research has shown that academic librarians have seen a power imbalance between their roles and those of the teaching departments, because of the gendered nature of librarianship and also the traditional campus roles that infer academic librarians to non-academic status (Julien and Pecoskie, 2009).

A case illustrating academic librarian's marginalisation is found in Tumbleson and Burke (2016: 11-13) who discuss Head and Eisenberg's (2009) Project Information Literacy Progress (PILP) that gave insight into the ways college students undertake course-related research. Head and Eisenberg's study finds that college and university students do not turn to academic librarians, but to their instructors and lecturers when they need a research coach (Tumbleson and Burke, 2016: 11-13). Head and Eisenberg's study recommended that librarians should "take an active role and initiate the dialogue with faculty to close a divide that may be growing between them and faculty and between them and students" (Tumbleson and Burke, 2016).

Because of blended librarianship that is embedded in institutional work (Bell and Shank, 2007), some questions arise as to how effectively academic librarians adhere to their dynamic roles and functions, and also how they are perceived in the university (Julien and Genuis, 2011; Kvenild et al., 2016; Tumbleson and Burke, 2016). The researcher used Lave and Wenger's (1991) LPP as it provides a model to study the evolution of Zimbabwean academic librarians to become blended librarians and the socio-historical and cultural contexts behind this new role in their workplaces.

The researcher has assumed that the theory and practice divide in academic librarianship can be reconciled if the duties of Zimbabwean academic librarians are formally recognised and consolidated into university operations. The formal recognition of

academic librarians would enable them to easily combine both the professional identity and academic identity to form their blended identity which they can use to effectively.

This section has tied the Zimbabwean academic librarian's professional identity which has been developing into blended librarianship, together with the intricate socio-political factors that are inhibiting blended librarianship. Therefore, this study explored how blended librarianship is practised among selected Zimbabwean academic libraries within their socio-political environments.

1.4 Purpose of the study

This exploratory phenomenological study served the purpose of investigating the phenomenon of the Zimbabwean academic librarian whose professional identity has been evolving into blended librarianship over the past decade (Mbambo, 2006; Pasipamire, 2012, 2015; Mavodza, 2014; Munyoro, 2014; Govo, 2015). A phenomenological study was designed to understand the academic librarian's perceptions and perspectives relative to a specific situation, in this case, blended librarianship. The phenomenological research tradition was preferred because it drew out essences from academic librarians themselves. Patton (2015:116-117) defined essences as "the core meanings mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced" by participants in a study.

An exploratory phenomenological study was ideal because it collected narrative accounts from the academic librarians to gain a rich understanding of the socio-historical and cultural contexts used in blended librarianship. Marshall and Rossman (2006: 78) describe an exploratory study as research that seeks to explain patterns related to phenomena, and also the relationships that shape the phenomena, for example the socio-historical and cultural contexts used in blended librarianship.

1.5 Primary objective of the study

The primary objective of this study sought to explore the shared experiences of blended librarianship to find out how effectively Zimbabwean academic librarians adhere to their dynamic roles and functions, and how they are perceived in the university.

1.6 Sub-objectives of the study

The following sub-objectives have been developed mainly using the theoretical aspects of Bell and Shank's (2007) blended librarianship and Lave and Wenger's (1991) LPP (discussed in Sections 3.1 and 2.2.1 respectively):

1.6.1 To establish how Zimbabwean academic librarians have adopted blended librarianship;
1.6.2 To explore the interpretive repertoires used by Zimbabwean academic librarians to define their blended roles;
1.6.3 To establish the competencies that facilitate blended librarianship in Zimbabwean academic librarians; and,
1.6.4 To identify significant events in the institutional work of academic librarians that have contributed in transforming academic librarians into blended librarians.

1.7 Research questions

The following research questions will shed light on the phenomenon under study:

1.7.1 How have Zimbabwean academic librarians adopted blended librarianship?
1.7.2 What are the interpretive repertoires used by Zimbabwean academic librarians to define their blended roles in the institutional work they conduct?
1.7.3 What are the competencies that facilitate blended librarianship in Zimbabwean higher education institutions?
1.7.4 What are the significant events experienced in the institutional work of academic librarians that have contributed in transforming academic librarians into blended librarians?

1.8 Overview of the theoretical framework

The theoretical framework was built on Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of LPP. The theory of LPP understands that learning is conducted through situated activity in what is called a Community of Practice (CoP). CoPs are helpful to appreciate that the workplace

is where learning and knowledge creation of blended librarianship take place through academic librarian's involvement and participation in authentic work tasks and real productive and goal-oriented activities. Therefore, Lave and Wenger's (1991) LPP comprehends that without the academic librarian's participation and experience in work processes, it would be difficult to conceive how they achieve situated negotiation and renegotiation of the meaning of blended librarianship.

1.9 Overview of the methodology

This study was framed through the philosophy of interpretivism. The basic tenet of interpretivism is that reality is socially, culturally, and historically constructed (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012: 60). Hence, to reconcile both objectivism and subjectivism, the researcher relied on the situated perspectives from the academic librarians. Interpretivism is also consistent with the research tradition of phenomenology used in the study (LeVasseur, 2003: 408-419; Van Manen, 2017a: 776-778). Creswell (2013: 35-36) defines phenomenological research, as a research strategy that captures the "essence" of human experiences concerning a phenomenon, through the point of view of the observed. However, phenomenology goes a step further and narrates the experiences such as how the participants felt when the phenomenon was occurring as well as the mental state that took place (Saldaña, 2011: 8). Although the research tradition of phenomenology also requires the researcher to utilise an interpretive ideology to make sense and draw out meanings from the narratives of the respondents (see Section 4.4.1.1), the researcher set aside his biases and experiences with the academic librarians.

This study may be classified as a multi-methods qualitative study (Schutz, Chambless and DeCuir, 2004: 167–168); it used more than one data collection procedure associated with the qualitative approach. It is important to note that this study did not mix qualitative methods with quantitative methods. The researcher preferred a multi-methods qualitative study because it combines a variety of research methods such as semi-structured questionnaires and interviews. The researcher hoped to identify, explore, and understand different dimensions of the units of study, thereby strengthening findings and enriching interpretations.

To fulfil the study's objective, the researcher collected data from a calculated sample of 101 academic librarians. These included line workers such as Technical Assistant (TAs), Senior Library Assistants (SLAs), Chief Library Assistants (CLAs), middle-level managers [1] such as Assistant Librarians (ALs) and Systems/Technology Librarians (SLs/TLs) and Library Board members (that comprised of Deputy Librarians). Data was collected from the:

a) Bindura State University of Education (BUSE);
b) Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT);
c) Lupane State University (LSU);
d) Midlands State University (MSU);
e) National University of Science and Technology (NUST); and,
f) Academic librarians from an academic library (PHSBL80 Library) which has been anonymised.

These universities were selected because of the presence of blended librarianship within them, as well as because of their proximity and convenience in data collection (some of them are close to each other).

1.10 Rationale for the study

The researcher hoped that by understanding the essences of Zimbabwean academic librarians in the context of the theory-practice-divide, solutions will be found on how to reduce the theory-practice-divide in the LIS profession. If academic librarians are divided on matters regarding the theory and practice of the discipline, LIS may not evolve into a mature discipline that is capable of solving its problems (Hjørland, 2000). With the dynamic changes in technology, academic libraries are now recruiting graduates from disciplines such as Computer Science (Chikonzo et al, 2014: 114). The graduates from competing disciplines have a higher professional status than academic librarians

[1] In Zimbabwe, the position of Assistant Librarians is a middle level managerial post which is regarded as a professional role, which has duties such as subject liaison and faculty liaison (Mbambo, 2006; Pasipamire, 2015). The Senior Library Assistant position is often treated as a para-professional post, which supports the Assistant Librarian's functions (Kujenga, 2011).

(Mugwisi and Hikwa, 2015: 178). The future of the academic librarian is uncertain if a college or university employer has lost confidence in academic librarians. Also, an understanding of what it means to be an academic librarian may provide insight into the professional problems associated with the position and the methods they use to solve the problems.

As few studies have engaged in the philosophical issues that have built academic librarianship in Zimbabwe, this study may be utilised as a reference point to guide future studies on the same topic. The philosophy of academic librarianship is within the scope of LIS and endeavours to reflect research into the profound meaning that underlies the LIS profession's definition and boundaries (Cossette, 2009: 5). While LIS is specific to attaining objective knowledge of the activities within libraries, the philosophy of librarianship accounts for the total experience of the profession and includes questions of valuing experience (Cossette, 2009: 8).

LIS philosophy is unique to each setting in a country, and though technologies arise, and eventually new onesemerge, LIS philosophy will remain constant in its setting. The philosophy of the LIS profession in Zimbabwe is an underlying assumption rooted in the way that LIS faculty and practitioners carry out their duties within the university setting. If the philosophy of the LIS profession in Zimbabwe is understood and inculcated to novice and seasoned practitioners, the discipline, and its practice may not lose direction.

1.11 Assumptions of the study

The study makes the following theoretical and methodological assumptions.

1.11.1 Theoretical assumptions

Blended librarianship is a result of participation in socio-cultural and socio-political activities in the university sphere or similar settings such as a college or a research institute. This is seen when academic librarians are becoming blended due to their increasing involvement in the teaching, learning and research processes.

1.11.2 Methodological assumptions

If blended librarianship has emerged out of academic librarians' participation in the socio-cultural and socio-political practices within their communities, then to investigate the very nature of this involvement, the researcher relied on the lived experiences in the institutional work of the academic librarians. Lived experiences embody the mundane and often taken-for-granted work practices that make up the social life of the academic librarian in the college or university (Denscombe, 2012: 95).

1.12 Definition of relevant terms

1.12.1 Academic librarian - a library professional who has been employed at a higher learning institution, that is, a university or a college. The professional qualifications of academic librarians are dependent on the nature of the post, the skills of the individual and the organisational mission (Hosburgh, 2011; Perini, 2015).

1.12.2 Blended librarian – an academic librarian who relies on the traditional skill set of librarianship together with the information technology hardware/software skills, and the instructional designer's competencies to apply the most suitable technology in the teaching-learning process (Bell and Shank, 2007: 3).

1.12.3 Community – in the context of this study refers to groups of persons whom the library serves as it implies that they hold a sense of belonging, shared ownership, and shared responsibility (Lankes, 2012: 6). Where the researcher uses the community to refer to academic librarians, Communities of Practice is the preferred term.

1.12.4 Communities of Practice - refers to groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Wenger and Trayner, 2015).

1.12.5 Disruptive technological innovation - refers to an unforeseen change in technologies generating the disappearance of products or services used up until that time

by society. This kind of innovation leads to the introduction or alteration of "organisational structures, distribution of roles and internal and external responsibilities" (Vargas et al., 2015).

1.12.6 Faculty status – faculty status in the Zimbabwean context consists of the recognition and participation of the academic library in university governance, for example university teaching and learning committees and Senate among others (Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium, 2016: 10). This form of faculty status may fall under what is termed "non-tenure-track faculty status" (Association of College & Research Libraries Committee on the Status of Academic Librarians, 2011a) and academic librarians are recognised for their expertise and participate fully in governance at the college/university (Galbraith, Garrison and Hales, 2015).

1.12.7 Identity dilemma - is a situation that occurs when the professional identity of an academic librarian is not regarded by others (including factions of academic librarians) in the same manner as would academic librarians who value their professional identity (Dunn and Creek, 2015: 261).

1.12.8 Institutional work - any form of work that is given an academic librarian to fulfil the mission of the higher learning institution. Institutional work is defined by formal job descriptions or the informal activities that are done by academic librarians in pursuit of the university library's goals.

1.12.9 Instructional design – "the process of arranging for learning to happen more safely, certainly, thoroughly, and expeditiously than might otherwise happen" (Allen, 2007: 26). For example, instructional design results in learners using less time, incurring less risk, and investing less energy in their activities.

1.12.10 Low-threshold technologies - are software and systems that "can be mastered without great difficulty if presented in a way that makes it quick and relatively easy to learn" (Bell and Shank, 2007).

1.12.11 Professional identity - refers to a part of the social order that reflects a person's professional practice in the workplace, what they do at work, which groups they belong to and the networks they have (Slay and Smith, 2011; Clarke, Hyde, and Drennan, 2013).

1.12.12 Theory-practice-divide – for the purpose of this study, the researcher adapted the theory-practice definition from Lave and Wenger (1991: 97-98); that is, it refers to the gap between what novice academic librarians have learnt at the LIS school (teaching curriculum) and what they are expected to learn in the workplace as practitioners (learning curriculum). This gap is prevalent because the learning curriculum consists of situated opportunities (which are mediated by the individual learner in different exemplars in the form of "goals"), while the teaching curriculum aims to obtain a meaning of what is learnt (mostly mediated by instructors) (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 98).

1.13 Summary of the chapter

This chapter began with an overview of the study's background which covers both the contextual and conceptual areas related to blended librarianship. The problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the research questions and objectives were highlighted. An overview of the theoretical framework used in the study was discussed, followed by an overview of the methodological issues of the study. The chapter also included the rationale for the study, the assumptions that the researcher has made about the phenomenon, and a definition of relevant terms that were used throughout the study.

Chapter 2 (the Theoretical Framework), discusses Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of LPP, giving more prominence to the theory's role in creating the research questions that have shaped this study. Chapter 3 (Literature Review), explores the topical issues around blended librarianship. Chapter 4 discusses pertinent issues around the study's' research methodology, the research tradition of phenomenology and how data was collected and analysed. Chapter 5 (Presentation of the findings) relies on the researchers' narrative, participants' verbatim vignettes, tables, charts and matrices to explain the study's findings. Chapter 6 (Discussion of the main findings) utilises the literature review and the

findings of the study to connect the themes that have come out in the study. Chapter 7 (Summary, conclusions and recommendations) connects the rest of the chapters together to bring out the experience of blended librarianship in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter builds a theoretical framework that guided this phenomenological study to explore the phenomenon of academic librarians whose professional identity has been evolving into blended librarianship through institutional work. To set the study's intellectual boundaries, the researcher relied on a theoretical framework that included the researcher's personal interests, topical research, and theory that is related to blended librarianship.

This chapter begins with a discussion surrounding the definition of the theoretical framework and why the term theoretical framework, has been preferred over the conceptual framework to put the reader into the context of the chapter. The theory that is discussed herein is Lave and Wenger's (1991) Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP). The chapter is concluded by summarising the interrelationship of the theoretical framework with other chapters of the study.

When discussing each concept of the theoretical framework, the researcher has also placed a reflective narrative to show how each concept was employed to construct the research questions in Section 1.7.

2.2 Defining a theoretical framework

To define a theoretical framework, it is rudimentary to first define what makes up a theoretical framework and that is a theory (Levy and Ellis, 2006). A theory is "an explanation of observed phenomena" (Levy and Ellis, 2006: 194). A theoretical framework is then complex because it can "fit together different theories, and does not depend on a particular context to make sense of ambiguous conditions or relationships" (Ravitch and

Riggan, 2012). In addition, a theoretical framework identifies the variables that can be used in findings and then makes logical connections that can be conceptualised (Levy and Ellis, 2006: 199). In contrast, a conceptual framework, is explained by Jabareen (2011: 50) to comprise of components that are consistent, have an endo-consistency (that is, a similar internal relationship which leads to the consistency of the whole), are distinct, heterogeneous and are inseparable.

In summary, the theoretical framework explains the "how" and 'why" of phenomena, while the conceptual framework explains the "what" (Ravitch and Riggan, 2012). However, the two terms (conceptual and theoretical framework) are not synonymous. Ravitch and Riggan (2012) purport that though the theoretical framework is part of the conceptual framework, both terms are used to argue that:

a) The research questions are an outgrowth of the argument for relevance;
b) The data to be collected provide the researcher with the raw material needed to explore the research questions;
c) The analytic approach allows the researcher to effectively respond to (if not always answer) those questions; and,
d) The research methods are a result of the conceptualisation.

The term theoretical framework was preferred over conceptual framework in this study because it implied that the researcher's thinking and ways of presenting theories were configured to allow the concepts of LPP to shape the research objectives, literature review, methodology and the analysis (Ravitch and Carl, 2016).

2.2.1 Legitimate peripheral participation

The concept of LPP has been described by Lave and Wenger (1991) as learning conducted through situated activity in Communities of Practice (CoP). CoPs are defined by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002: 4) as "social groups that come together to share common interests and goals, with the aim of sharing information, developing knowledge and developing themselves both personally and professionally". Lave and Wenger (1991) coined the concept of CoPs to describe the context where learning and

knowledge creation take place through individuals' involvement and participation in authentic work tasks and real productive and goal-oriented activities (Talja, 2010: 206).

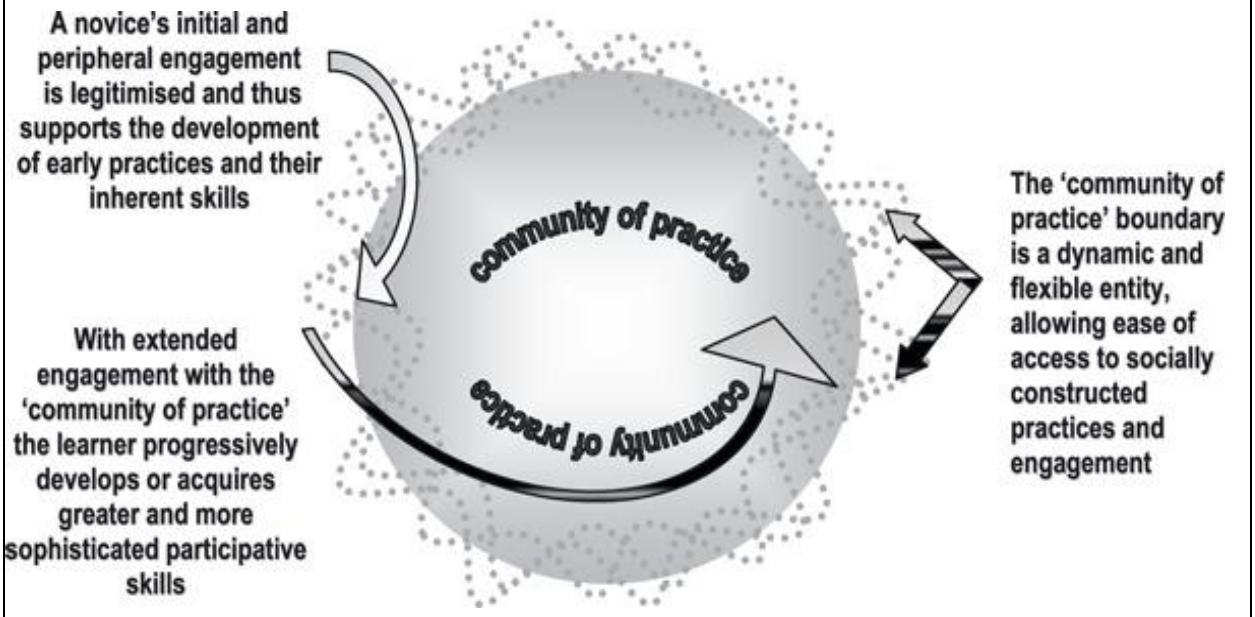
CoPs have led Lave and Wenger (1991: 35) to point out that learning is not merely situated in practice as if it were some independently verifiable process that happens in space and time; rather they view learning as an integral part of generative social practice in everyday life. To illustrate how CoPs function, Wenger and Trayner (2015) have stated that CoPs have these three unique features:

a) **The domain**: with an identity defined by a shared interest to a cause and membership that implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people. The competencies in the domain may not be regarded as "expertise" outside the community;
b) **The community**: members who interact in activities and discussions, help each other, and share information about their domain and in turn build relationships that maintain the domain; and,
c) **The practice**: the members of a CoP are practitioners within the domain. They have common interpretive repertoires in experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems.

In the case of this study, LIS is the **domain** that is shared by the academic librarians. The **community** is the group of academic librarians in any university library who interact with each other or with other academic librarians external to their institution to advance the practice of academic librarianship. In this study, the **practice** is academic librarianship, which is experienced by members of the LIS profession who work in higher education institutions. Practice takes time and sustained interaction and cannot be achieved through one interaction; hence the community must be a group of individuals who work with each other over time (Lave, 1977; Lave and Wenger, 1991, 2002; Firth, 2008; Talja, 2010).

LPP was introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991) when they realised that the social cognitive theories in the 1980s were unable to deduce relevant meaning to the historically and culturally specific circumstances of apprenticeships (Lave, 1977; Lave and Wenger, 1991, 2002; Talja, 2010). Prior to the introduction of LPP, Lave (1977) had conducted a

study on craft apprenticeship in West Africa, and later on craft apprenticeship among the Vai and Gola tailors in Liberia. The tailors in Lave's (1977) study used an apprenticeship system where apprentices observed masters and other apprentices at work, to learn the full process of becoming a master and identifying themselves as masters (**see Figure 2.1**).



Source: (Firth, 2008: 47)

Figure 2.1: Legitimate Peripheral Practice

Lave and Wenger (1991: 35) add that their coining of the concept LPP was intentional to reflect characteristics of "**legitimate**", that is, the ways of belonging to a CoP, that is, having the power to establish or alter some of the situations at the workplace. "**Peripherality**" is used in the positive sense to reflect the partial participation of new professionals, suggesting that there are multiple, varied, more-or-less, engaged and, general ways of being located in the fields of participation defined by a community. Lave and Wenger (1991: 36) have made the following argument:

> **Peripheral participation** is being in the social world…As a place in which one is kept from participating more fully - often legitimately, from the broader perspective of society at

> large - it is a disempowering position. Beyond that, legitimate peripherality can be a position at the articulation of related communities. In this sense, it can itself be a source of power or powerlessness, in affording or preventing articulation and interchange among Communities of Practice. The ambiguous potentialities of legitimate peripherality reflect the concept's pivotal role in providing access to a nexus of relations otherwise not perceived as connected.

The researcher realised that the above concepts and constructs of LPP have parallels with the phenomenological research tradition. This is because LPP is not merely interested in exploring the mundane behaviours of a CoP, rather it also seeks to find out the **experiences of participants** who are working either legitimately or peripherally in their work. Another parallel between phenomenology and LPP can be seen in the work of Wertz et al. (2011: 126-128) who argue that a phenomenological experience can take varying forms, and in LPP peripherality is said to take various forms (see above quotation). This assumption was of interest to the researcher because it formed the basis for the tentative model (in Section 5.4) which was used to describe some of the general themes of this study, as well as to give interpretations and form a general essence to the study.

The theory of LPP was also used to frame the research questions that shaped this study by interpolating its variables such as the use of agency in the development of the professional identities, negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the social world and the learning curriculum followed by the members of a CoP. The headings below discuss these variables and match them with their corresponding research questions, and what the question wanted to uncover.

2.2.1.1 Negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the social world

Lave and Wenger (1991: 55-57) claimed that LPP could be used to study social reproduction of the CoP. They state that social reproduction is “sustained participation of newcomers, becoming old-timers” and what is of interest here is the “conflict between the forces that support processes of learning and those that work against them”. Therefore,

social reproduction is investigated through negotiations and renegotiations of social processes.

The case studies that were presented by Lave and Wenger (1991) explored how apprentices learnt their trades by observing others through peripheral participation. LPP raises the **importance of agency** among participants from the start of their **experience** until the **development of their professional identity**. This variable of LPP led the researcher to raise questions such as what may constitute peripheral participation in the academic library and how academic libraries engage their agency to peripheral participation. These questions became the basis for generating **research question 1.7.1** that sought to engage interrelations between the academic librarian's agency, practice and blended librarianship, within the theory of LPP.

The researcher also examined the academic librarians' participation and experience in work processes, to understand the **situated negotiation and renegotiation of the meaning** of blended librarianship. Lave and Wenger (1991: 52) underscore that negotiations for meaning and the development of professional identities imply that sense-making and experience are in constant interaction and are equally constitutive. Accordingly, Lave and Wenger (1991: 50-52) in their theory, argue that perceiving identities requires an examination into the whole person acting in the world while paying attention to the ways their work is influenced by socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political factors. This understanding prompted the development of **research question 1.7.2** which investigated how academic librarians make sense of their blended librarianship vis-à-vis the workplace environment, practices and background

Though LPP centres on the participation in social practice, examining the person-in-the-world, and as a member of a socio-cultural community, there are some critics to these assertions. Some weaknesses of LPP are that it pays less attention to the influence of multiple individual socio-cultural identities (Teeuwsen, Ratković and Tilley, 2014: 683).

Moreover, critics of LPP state that it reflects a straight path, a trajectory, from newcomer to old-timer (expert), periphery to centre (Lemke, 1997). In the lived experience of academic librarians, there may be conditions that need to be fulfilled before they can be blended librarians. Lee and Roth (2003) have also criticised LPP, arguing that becoming part of a CoP and belonging to one is not necessarily an easy task:

> The novice, wanting to belong, must learn the practices and discourses of the community, but the community, needing to reproduce itself, also must find a place for the novice. By bringing their uniqueness to a community, the novice also always has the power to transform it even as they are being transformed…A felt tension ensues…moreover, conflicts arise as the novice attempts to balance his interest with the demands of the community.

Research question 1.7.4 was built to highlight the significant events that have occurred in the work practices of academic librarians to become blended librarians. Significant events were not just positive issues, but they could reflect some negative ones that were facilitating academic librarians' work roles to be blended librarianship. For an event to be significant, the researcher examined the outcome of negotiating or renegotiating blended librarianship roles within the academic library.

2.2.1.2 The learning curriculum within a CoP

To understand the type of learning that occurs in academic libraries, the researcher took the LPP's concept of a "learning curriculum", that is, competencies that are situated in the CoP (Lave and Wenger, 1991, 2002), to develop **research question 1.7.3**. Additionally, to obtain the skills needed for the blended librarianship and the learning curriculum at the workplace, the researcher hoped that this research question would also highlight the methods that are used by the academic librarians to gain the competencies that are needed in their organisation or CoP's learning curriculum.

2.3 Summary of the theoretical framework

This chapter discussed the theory of LPP by Lave and Wenger (1991), and its antecedent CoP developed by the same authors. The main thrust between the two theories is that

individuals learn in the workplace, and this was helpful in drawing up questions that highlight the academic librarian's involvement in authentic work tasks. Lave and Wenger's (1991) LPP was used to conceive how situated negotiation and renegotiation of the meaning of blended librarianship was achieved, by setting parallels with the phenomenological research tradition that is used in the study. Therefore, LPP was used to develop the upcoming Chapter 3 which contains the literature review, the methodology in Chapter 4 and the later chapters (Chapter 6, wherein there is a discussion on the findings, Chapter 7, for the conclusions and recommendations).

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

> A literature review is a written document that presents a logically argued case founded on a comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge about a topic of study. This case establishes a convincing thesis to answer the study's question (Machi and McEvoy, 2012: 4).

3.1 Introduction

This exploratory phenomenological study served the purpose of investigating the phenomenon of the Zimbabwean academic librarian whose professional identity has been evolving into blended librarianship over the past decade.

The chapter critically exposes the manner in which blended librarianship was adopted in academic libraries from a global perspective. The chapter also provides literature relating to the interpretive repertoires of blended librarianship through the academic librarian's image, status, identity and prestige in higher learning institutions. These interpretive repertoires came from the academic librarians and the communities that they serve. Consequently, the literature also uncovered the enabling conditions that facilitate blended librarianship in higher education institutions.

3.2 Introducing the concept of blended librarianship

Bell and Shank (2004: 372-374) suggest that blended librarianship is a solution to alleviate the following threats to the academic librarian's existence:

a) Challenges with ways to harness and weave new technologies into [the] existing fabric of high-quality information service delivery;
b) The increasing competitive information environment in which the academic library is no longer the de facto resource of the first choice; and,

c) The eventual marginalisation of the academic library in the university or college.

Academic librarians now face competition from several information sources that include eLearning management systems (eLMS) and Google (Garoufallou et al., 2008: 133-145). In addition, Sinclair (2009: 504) establishes that blended librarianship has been borne out of the need to bring the academic librarian to their original role of being the *de facto* centre of information on campus. Blended librarianship is therefore envisioned to be the "magic formulae" that can reassert the role of the academic librarian in the teaching, learning and research process. Authors such as Pasipamire (2012: 152) have been advocating for flexible library professionals in higher learning institutions, who can apply both LIS theory and practice into their roles of information provision and dissemination. A blended librarian can be seen fulfilling this role in the definition of Bell and Shank (2007: 3), that a blended librarian means:

> …an academic librarian who combines the traditional skill set of librarianship with the instructional technologist's hardware/software skills, and the instructional or educational designer's ability to apply technology appropriately in the teaching-learning process.

Bell and Shank (2007: 3) caution that blended librarianship is not synonymous with multi-tasking; rather it is about "integrating new skill sets from instructional design and technology into the practice (of academic librarians) and using those skills to better integrate the library into the teaching and learning process". In a follow-up article Bell and Shank (2011) state that blended librarianship is also "not library-centric (that is, focused on buildings and collections), rather it is librarian-centric (that is, focused on people's skills, the knowledge they have and the relationships they build). Bell and Shank (2007) view academic librarians as **part instructional technologists** who work with faculty to match the appropriate technologies for teaching and learning then **part instructional designer** assisting faculty in bridging teaching and learning gaps.

To delineate between the two blended roles, that of the instructional technologist and the instructional designer, Bell and Shank (2007: 3) have argued that:

> …instructional technologists work almost exclusively with technology solutions or advise faculty when technology may not be the solution. By contrast, instructional designers focus

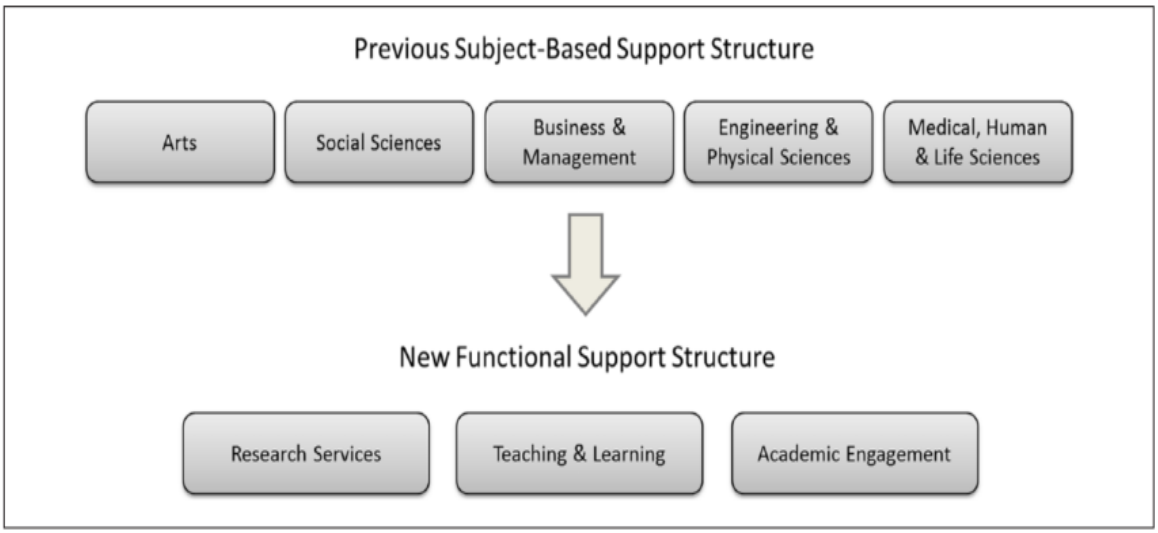
> on the pedagogy rather than the technology. Their focus is on identifying learning gaps, understanding the problems that stand between learners and what they need to master, and identifying the products or strategies that will enable students to achieve academic success. In many cases, this means helping faculty with pedagogical methods that involve no technology at all.

In Bell and Shank's (2011: 107) perspective a blended librarian is a compassionate and disruptive innovator on their campuses who is more responsive to the contemporary changes affecting higher education. The principle shared by Bell and Shank (2011: 107-8) is that the academic librarian should be an integral educational partner as well as a catalyst for students' knowledge enrichment and intellectual inquiry. Thus, the academic library should be aligned to the mission of the university or college where they practise (Oakleaf, 2011: 63).

Bell and Shank (2004: 374) developed six principles to reassert the role of academic librarians in the teaching and learning process. In developing these principles, they urge academic librarians to adopt blended roles which are beyond the scope of traditional librarianship. In the same vein, Sinclair (2009: 507) rephrases Bell and Shank's (2004: 374) six principles to promote blended librarianship within the context of learning commons. The principles given by Bell and Shank intersect with those of Sinclair (2009: 507) as they both touch on the role of the blended librarian as a change agent in the college/university and the need for blended librarians to collaborate with faculty and students when delivering instructional technologies. The principles of Bell and Shank (2004: 374) and Sinclair (2009: 507) can be summarised as: Academic librarians must:

a) become early adopters of technology to lead academia into the innovations;
b) collaborate and partner with faculty and IT staff to become more engaged in the teaching and learning process;
c) apply information literacy principles throughout library programs;
d) be available at the point of need, that is, for one-on-one consultation, appointments;
e) rely on tech-savvy staff; and,
f) integrate print resources and electronic resources into the teaching and learning process.

In summary, Shank (2006: 517) argues that library instruction (that is, bibliographic instruction, information literacy, user instruction, library research courses or research instruction), creates a work environment that places greater emphasis on librarians obtaining and enhancing their instruction skills. Furthermore, academic libraries are integrating Information Literacy Skills (ILS) into the faculty's curriculum so that their communities can appropriately and more efficiently find, use and evaluate the vast array of resources now available both in print and electronic format (Clapp et al., 2013; Davis, 2013; Mugwisi, 2015; Carroll, Tchangalova and Harrington, 2016).



Source: (Hoodless and Pinfield, 2016: 2)

Figure 3.1: Comparison of the old and new structures

Therefore, blended librarianship has created opportunities for academic librarians to reach out to their communities in the physical and virtual research, teaching and learning environments, at times resulting in restructuring academic libraries from subject librarianship to functional librarianship as seen in Hoodless and Pinfield's (2016: 2) diagrammatic representation in **Figure 3.1**.

Examples of empirical studies in blended librarianship are also prevalent in the literature, for instance, Doan and Ferry (2006), Kesselman and Watstein (2009), Tumbleson and

Burke (2009), Corrall (2010), Corrall and Keates (2010), and Perini (2015). The commonality of these studies is in their consistency with the definitions of blended librarianship given by Bell and Shank (2004, 2007, 2011), discussed earlier on in this section.

3.2.1 The enabling conditions for blended librarianship in academic libraries

This section discusses the conditions that enable blended librarianship to occur in academic libraries, to gauge if it can be fully be implemented in an academic library.

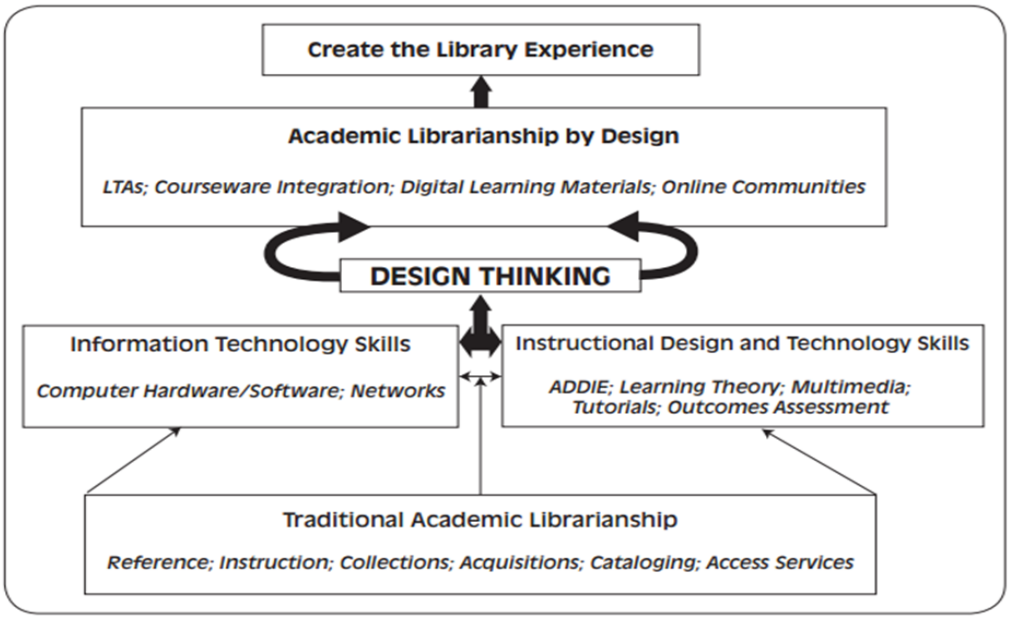
3.2.1.1 The application of design thinking to academic librarianship

At its core, blended librarianship adds the principles of applied design thinking which take the form of looking at library services from the perspective of the community. Such design thinking takes a systematic approach to solving an instructional problem, and the process begins by identifying the performance problem of learners and then determines if the instruction is the appropriate solution using the perspectives of the learners. Bell and Shank (2007: 504) state that blended librarianship has these distinct principles that guide the design thinking:

a) The ability to put oneself in the place of the user of the product or service to understand how the user can receive the optimal learning experience;
b) A willingness to thoughtfully and creatively move through a series of gradual changes in developing a product or service and use this prototyping method to arrive at an optimal experience for the user; and,
c) A commitment to both formative and summative evaluation in determining how well a product or service meets the needs of the user, and then making the necessary adjustments to improve the performance of that product or service to ensure an excellent library or learning experience for the user.

Academic librarians may use design thinking to integrate the library into the teaching, learning, and research process in order to add value to the process of using the academic library for research and discovery (Bell and Shank, 2007: 31). Value is added when the

library community's use of the library is greater than the academic librarian's involvement in the process. The added value that academic librarians bring into the process refers to the library experience (see **Figure 3.2**), (Bell and Shank, 2007: 33).



Source: (Bell and Shank, 2007: 33)

Figure 3.2: Mindmap for academic librarianship by design

Instructional design starts with the identification of learning gaps such as poor scores among students or the lack of library skills among faculty and students. Bell and Shank (2007) are of the opinion that a learning gap occurs when the present knowledge of the students and faculty does not match the subject matter or skills that they need. Bell and Shank (2007: 40-42) prescribe that the academic librarian must follow the steps in the instructional design model called ADDIE to solve student's learning problems. ADDIE stands for:

a) Analysis - the process of defining what is to be learned;
b) Design - the process of specifying how it is to be learned;
c) Development - the process of authoring and producing learning materials;

d) Implementation - the process of installing the instruction product in a real-world context; and,
e) Evaluation - the process of determining the impact of the instruction.

An alternative approach to ADDIE which takes up less time and resources is called BLAAM which stands for the Blended Librarians Adapted ADDIE Model (Turner, 2016: 479). BLAAM streamlines ADDIE for academic librarians and follows these principles:

a) Assess learner needs through discussions with course instructors (assuming library instruction is part of a larger class, such as English Composition) and by informal assessments of student needs;
b) Create simple, measurable learning objectives;
c) Quickly develop instruction by drafting a simple plan and sharing it with a colleague or the course instructor for feedback;
d) Deliver the instruction and, as appropriate, provide training to other librarians teaching the lesson; and,
e) Measure the degree to which learning objectives were achieved to provide evidence of learning and to make enhancements to instruction.

Bell and Shank (2007: 40-42) emphasise that academic librarians must not create "instructional products" based on the librarians' perception of what the learners need to know, rather the academic librarians must be informed by an in-depth analysis of what the learners already know or what they really need to know. Oakleaf (2011: 64) gives an example of subject specialists working at an engineering department at North Carolina State University. These subject specialists have integrated their library services to include the learning needs of their students together with those of future employers and graduate/professional programs. If such an approach can be applied in a higher education institution's library, the library would not only improve lifelong learning among students, but it may contribute to the development of students' professional identity.

Lecturers, academic librarians or instructional designers may be consulted by faculty to develop new LIS programs or courses from scratch. However, Bell and Shank (2007: 43) are thoughtful to mention that few academic librarians have the necessary time to

thoroughly and comprehensively implement ADDIE in designing ILS instruction. Instead, they believe that when academic librarians espouse the values of ADDIE in their programs, they can develop an understanding of learning needs and work towards meeting these observed learning gaps. In addition, Turner (2016: 479) has perceived that the components of BLAAM and ADDIE may be used interchangeably, and are customisable to fit specific situations. However, Turner (2016: 487-488) is careful in suggesting that ADDIE, BLAAM, or other instructional design methods can be applied without considering a context because ADDIE and BLAAM may only model the teaching, learning and research process, yet there is a possibility that these models do not provide a full understanding of the instructional design process.

3.2.1.2 Adoption of technologies and new techniques

The success of blended librarianship lies in its ability to engage the teaching, learning and research processes through the integration of ICTs. There are diverse reasons why academic libraries may choose to adopt instructional technologies or low-threshold technology applications (LTAs) and also to suggest the same technologies to students and faculty. Al-Fadhli, Corrall and Cox (2016) who conducted a study to find out the factors that influence technology adoption in the academic libraries of Kuwait established that academic libraries are mostly influenced by the top-down pattern of the decision (that is, library directors), community needs, a quest for prestige among academic librarians, and faith in technology as a solution to problems. However, Al-Fadhli, Corrall and Cox (2016: 10) warn against what they term a technolust, wherein academic librarians adopt new technologies or push new technologies to their communities without properly examining whether the communities need the technology. Similarly, Luo (2012: 160), highlights that academic librarians who rely on technology face some of the following challenges:

a) The academic librarians cannot exercise any control over the tools they introduce, as the tools can change, grow, or disappear with little or no warning;
b) It is time-consuming to learn all the tools to provide a tutorial and to successfully implement the tool's usage to improve productivity at work; and,
c) If the tools are not embraced by the community, it becomes difficult to promote their usage.

There are precautions taken by Bell and Shank (2011: 105-110) to solve the above challenges noted by Luo (2012: 160) and Al-Fadhli, Corrall and Cox (2016: 10), such as advising academic librarians that technology may not always be the solution to some of the problems faced by faculty and students. It was suggested by Bell and Shank (2007: 41-43) that the steps in ADDIE should be followed instead so that academic librarians use logical steps to solve the challenges instead of mere intuition to avoid technolust.

3.2.1.2.1 eLearning management systems (eLMS)

Blended librarians have a presence in the courseware of their faculties through eLMS also known as course management systems (CMS) or interactive learning systems (Bell and Shank, 2007: 81-83). The researcher has deduced from Tchangalova and Feigley (2008), Bell and Shank (2011) and Reale (2016) that courseware simply means any interactive web-based digital resource for instruction. Within this context, the academic librarian can take advantage of online and hybrid learning (blended learning that combines face-to-face and online instruction) to introduce students to scholarly research resources and methods and to market the abundance of the academic library's collection through ILS (Kvenild et al., 2016).

Therefore, the blended librarian uses the instructional design role to help students and faculty to achieve academic success. While faculty is the expert on the subject matter, the blended librarian is an expert at organising the learning needs of students in a way that achieves the best in the teaching, learning and research process (Bell and Shank, 2007: 3).

Higher education has also seen a rise in the use of instructional technologies such as Canvas, Blackboard, Sakai and Moodle which augment face-to-face teaching by delivering time-of-need instruction (Carroll, Tchangalova and Harrington, 2016: 125). Although there are examples of eLMS in the literature (for example, Wolfe, Naylor and Drueke, 2010; Bell, 2016; Daniel, 2016; Phillips, 2016) to illustrate the blended librarian's involvement in the learning of the student, Tumbleson and Burke (2016: 11-13) cited the Campus Computing Project (2011), noting that some of the reporting institutions have no

standard LMS in place, and there may be individual colleges or schools within the institution that use a separate LMS.

When there are several eLMS in one institution, Tumbleson and Burke (2016: 37) counsel that it may not be possible for librarians to learn multiple systems or adapt content to fit the rules of separate systems. Instead, academic librarians should take the suggestion made by York and Vance (2009: 203-204) that they should embed library resources into the LMS that is used by the faculty. This proposal set by York and Vance (2009: 203-204) means that academic librarians do not need to have direct access to individual eLMS courses, they can ask the systems administrators or the lecturers to post information on their behalf.

Another alternative, to manage eLMS is given by Carroll, Tchangalova and Harrington (2016: 126) who differentiate between interactive and static eLMS. They assert that interactive eLMS provide a flipped classroom model of instruction, in which students obtain lectures through multimedia at home and then conduct their exercises and applications in the classroom. Furthermore, Carroll, Tchangalova and Harrington (2016: 126) claim that a static eLMS may have subject guides, static websites with information resources, for students to consult during the semester in addition to providing one-time lectures per faculty’s requests. They conclude that the static LMS offers a passive learning experience and achieves a low level of retention of ILS.

However, Bell and Shank (2007: 124) argued that the uptake of eLMS among faculty is usually slow because of the difficulty in locating existing courseware. They add that academic librarians can use their traditional skills of cataloguing or metadata to organise courseware for traditional library catalogues. An exemplification of Bell and Shank's (2007) observation is found in a study by Searing and Greenlee (2011: 289) who found that LIS faculty at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign did not use the online reference sources and subject guides for specific LIS courses because the academic librarians targeted students as the primary intended audience for the resources as the information was put on student portals.

Studies such as Garrote and Pettersson (2007), York and Vance (2009) and Leeder and Lonn (2014) have also found that when lecturers are not targeted as the primary users of courseware and LMSs, have no training on the use of the LMS or the LMS is too difficult to learn, they show no value for these resources, and hardly ever recommend students to use them or to inquire about them from the library. Similarly, Tchangalova and Feigley (2008) made an observation at the University of Maryland Libraries (UML), that academic librarians found it disturbing to find that guides were underutilisedby their communities.

3.2.1.3 Cooperation from communities in the colleges and universities

There is wide agreement amongst some authors (Bell and Shank, 2004, 2011; Shank, 2006; Shumaker, 2009; 2012; Kvenild et al., 2016; Reale, 2016; Tumbleson and Burke, 2016), that there must be cooperation and collaboration from faculty to place ILS and the academic librarian in the classroom. Faculty-library collaborations should move beyond collaborative activity in ILS, to create other forms and methods for enhancing collaboration with faculty and other academic support professions (Bell and Shank, 2007: 66).

Kesselman and Watstein (2009: 392-393) have made claims that the academic library may engage in multidisciplinary collaborations as well, where they can bring in their subject knowledge, together with other types of expertise. These kinds of collaborations might also require the collective expertise of several different librarians: public service, subject librarians, technical services librarians, and those well versed in digital technologies. Kesselman and Watstein (2009: 393) go on to imply that academic librarians, as generalists, can provide a bridge to collaborative groups in forging a common understating of each discipline’s unique perspectives, methods, and vocabularies.

To facilitate collaboration, academic librarians must first demonstrate to faculty that they have the same capabilities. However, Davis (2013: 206) warns that many academic librarians who conduct instructional activities may possess mere passing knowledge of

pedagogical theory. Davis (2013: 206) suggests that academic librarians may bridge their gap in pedagogical theory and knowledge by designing effective ILS instruction using instructional design models, principles and collaborating with an instructional designer. If the academic librarians follow the recommendations of Davis (2013: 206), lecturers may place value on library services and students will be more likely to engage the academic librarian in their assignments and research.

Moreover, Kim and Shumaker (2015: 456) and Kvenild et al. (2016) are of the opinion that academic librarians must proactively make connections with faculty and students by inviting teaching faculty to collaborate in their eLMS courses/subject guides, both in-person and electronically, both individually and in groups. However, Sewell (1983: 212) and Julien and Pecoskie (2009) have cautioned that academic librarians have often perceived themselves and have been regarded as servants of their "patrons," especially by the teaching faculty, thereby making it difficult for some librarians and the lecturers to view each other as equal collaborative colleagues.

3.2.2 Summary of the discourses in blended librarianship

Many terms can be used to define approaches where academic librarians participate in the courses within their universities, either electronically or through the face-to-face approach, that is, embedded librarianship, class librarian and lurking librarian (York and Vance, 2009: 198). The researcher has established that blended librarianship and embedded librarianship have different labels, only because of the choice of the authors of books and articles on the topic, though the literature of blended librarianship is the same as that of embedded librarianship. Both blended librarians and embedded librarians rely on skills in instructional design, technological instruction, and traditional skills in librarianship to serve their communities and make lasting relationships with them (Bell and Shank, 2004; 2007; Shumaker, 2009; York and Vance, 2009; Drewes and Hoffman, 2010; Kwanya, Stilwell and Underwood, 2012; Hines, 2013; Kvenild et al., 2016; Reale, 2016).

On this basis, blended librarianship shares similar characteristics with embedded librarianship because they both present scenarios where academic librarians partner with faculty and staff to embed themselves in the classroom, as well as research services, in courses and in the campus curriculum. Held (2010: 6) shows the relationship between blended librarianship and embedded librarianship when he observes that:

> …the trends of blended and embedded librarianship offer focused, empowering roles for librarians. These librarians lead rather than follow faculty, and they embrace technology for developing new services and relationships…these strategies include building an online presence, promoting expertise in instructional design, assessing, and becoming problem-solvers for faculty working in CMS. The goal is to partner with faculty, not simply support them.

This study treated blended librarianship and embedded librarianship as synonymous, preferring the term blended librarianship because it allows the instructional design and the instructional technologist roles of academic librarians to be illuminated. Bell and Shank (2007: 3) have noticed that there is a possibility that most academic librarians may have accomplished some tasks that could fit into either instructional design or instructional technologist without even knowing it. Bell and Shank (2007) are likely to be right because both the instructional technologist and instructional designer roles cut across both academic and non-academic functions. It is no wonder Perini (2015), also preferred to use the term “blended professional” to study the merger of lecturers’ roles with academic librarians’ work. Also, the recent decline in academic library budgets in North America has decreased the number of instructional designers in universities leading to the integration of the instructional design role within the role and scope of academic librarianship (Mullins, 2014: 339). From an African perspective, Raju (2017: 265) argues that there are few posts which have been advertised, looking for individuals with blended skills, perhaps indicating that instructional designers may be few, resulting in academic librarians practising instructional design duties.

Another distinction of blended librarianship from any other related concepts comes from Bell and Shank (2011: 107), who made succinct claims that the blended librarian concept is different from learning commons, where the latter refers to the partnership between the

academic librarians and staff with specific IT skills. They argue that the blended librarian should be a T-shaped professional because they have traditional LIS competencies (the vertical leg of the T) and are expected to branch out into other skills and disciplines (the top of the horizontal line of the T).

Blended librarians do not need to be experts in instructional design and technology but must be knowledgeable enough to adapt, practise and converse with instructional design and technical staff (Bell and Shank, 2011; Vargas et al., 2015). Both embedded librarianship and blended librarianship focus on the academic librarian having a presence in their communities (Bell, 2013: vii–xi). Therefore, the researcher has determined that blended librarianship and embedded librarianship are synonymous but are set apart in how they apply design thinking in their work.

3.3 The Interpretive repertoires of academic librarians

To understand the interpretive repertoires that are attached to blended librarianship, this literature review relied on the attitudes and perceptions of academic librarians and their communities towards blended librarianship. The researcher's line of reasoning is consistent with Wetherell and Potter's (1988) definition of interpretive repertoires as "constructs" of a social object within a context. Interpretive repertoires explain the motives and traits of academic librarians and their communities through their attitudes and perceptions of blended librarianship. The literature review cross-examined the role, identity, image and status of the academic librarians, as these facets could present enough evidence to justify academic librarians' interpretive repertoires.

3.3.1 The concept of image and identity

It is hard to distinguish between the image of the librarian and the image of the library sector as a whole since most definitions tend to intertwine these aspects (Aharony, 2006: 238). The concepts of image and identity are closely related and may not necessarily bear the same outcomes. An image may explain the way in which the outside world sees the librarians, that is, an attitude, and identity is the way in which the librarians see themselves, that is, a perception (Perini, 2015: 18-22).

Attitudes are not the same as perceptions, although perception is closely related to attitudes. Pickens (2005: 43) defines an attitude as a "mind-set or a tendency to act in a way due to both an individual's experience and temperament". It is likely that the attitudes of academic librarians may take a positive or negative direction with very few cases being neutral. Perception is the process by which people interpret and organise phenomena to produce a meaningful experience of the world (Borkowski, 2015: 59). In other words, Pickens (2005: 43) argued that when a person confronts a phenomenon, the person interprets it as something meaningful based on prior experiences.

However, what an individual interprets or perceives may be substantially different from reality. Consequently, the researcher paid attention to the interpretive repertoires which provide guidance that the interpretation of events is not homogenous among people (Wetherell and Potter, 1988; Wetherell, 1998, 2009; Wertz et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013). Therefore, there are instances where the image of academic librarians may not match their identity.

For example, the librarian sees himself/herself first and foremost as a professional who builds collections and opens up access to them, who makes information available. However, the public sees the librarian as someone who stamps books (Aharony, 2006: 238-239; Langridge, Riggi and Schultz, 2014: 229-256).

3.3.1.1 Image and identity of academic librarians

Nearly all academic libraries provide some degree of instruction, whether it comes in the form of ILS for undergraduate students, training sessions for fellow librarians and library technicians, or the development of online learning modules for remote library users (Turner, 2016: 477). The literature has established that 21st century academic librarians are viewed as teachers by their communities because of their highly valued roles of instructional designer and instructional technologist (Walter, 2008: 51-52). The two roles, instructional design and instructional technologist coincide with teaching ILS and e-Learning (Clapp et al., 2013; Hsieh et al., 2014; Mugwisi, 2015; Johnson, 2016; Mullins,

2016). Academic librarians have in turn sought new models for professional staffing to include instructional designer and instructional technologist roles (Shank, 2006; Bell and Shank, 2007; 2011; Campbell, 2014; Vargas et al., 2015), thereby generating an impact on the broader mission(s) of the college or university library (Oakleaf, 2011: 62).

	I teach	I do not teach
I am a teacher	**Teacher-librarian**	**Learning support**
I am not a teacher	**Librarian who teaches**	**Trainer**

Source: (Mckinney and Wheeler, 2015)

Figure 3.3: The four categories of description in teaching ILS

Studies have also been conducted to investigate academic librarians' professional identities from their perspectives. Typical studies with this orientation include Wilson and Halpin (2006) and Mckinney and Wheeler (2015), among others. For instance, Wilson and Halpin (2006: 89) found that although LIS professionals have acquired skills such as IT, administrative and management skills, which could be transferred to contexts outside LIS, they still saw themselves as service providers instead of professionals with an equal standing, for example, to the medical and legal professions. Mckinney and Wheeler (2015: 118) found that academic librarians perceived their teaching roles as teacher-librarian; learning support; a librarian who teaches; and trainer, depending on their conceptions of themselves, their teaching of ILS, and other teachers (**see Figure 3.3**).

3.3.2 The concepts of status and prestige in professions

Status and prestige are measures of occupations with a long tradition in the social sciences. However, these two terms are not used synonymously. Research into the status of occupations is usually based on an occupational prestige ladder, in which occupations are ranked by respondents from high to low by means of the prestige associated with the

professions (Abbott, 1998; 2001a, 2001b). It has been realised by Swigger (2010: 26) that status is measured by reference to physical characteristics, whereas prestige depends on opinions that society holds about a particular occupation. The prestige of a profession ascribes to some underlying features such as education and training, income, social security and so forth. Moreover, the status implies attributes such as prestige, respect, honour, and reputation (Swigger, 2010: 26).

3.3.2.1 Status and prestige of academic librarians

The origins of the faculty status of the academic librarian can be traced to advocates such as Sawtelle who lived in the 1800s and expressed views that "librarianship ought not to be appendixed to a professorship, but be itself a professorship" (Wyss, 2010: 376). Although this recognition of academic librarians as faculty was the subject of discussions from the 1800s onwards, it only came to fruition in the late 1970s (Wyss, 2010; Hosburgh, 2011; Galbraith, Garrison and Hales, 2015; Silva, Galbraith and Groesbeck, 2017). Faculty status for librarians has been defined by Bryan (2007: 782) as the:

> …official recognition by an institution of higher education that librarians are part of the instructional and research staff by conferment of ranks and titles identical to those of faculty, and **equal** benefits, rights, and responsibilities.

There are different established standards for the faculty status of academic librarians to lobby universities to recognise academic librarians with similar roles and functions as faculty. For example, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Standards for Faculty Status for Academic Librarians, which were approved by ACRL Board in June 2007 and then revised in October 2011 (Association of College and Research Libraries Committee on the Status of Academic Librarians, 2011b) and the Guidelines for Academic Librarians Without Faculty Status (Association of College and Research Libraries Committee on the Status of Academic Librarians, 2011a).

However standards represent a best-case scenario yet, in reality, these standards are rarely implemented fully at any given institution (Hosburgh, 2011). In the same manner, Swigger (2010: 25) has cautioned that the prestige of librarians is a matter of perception,

and awarded as an act of perception. Swigger (2010: 25) notes that professional groups such as the ACRL may attempt to shape how the public perceives its members, through marketing, public relations and standards, but ultimately the perception of academic librarians is shaped by many factors, most of which are beyond the professional group's control. For example, standards do not protect professions from changes such as new knowledge, when other occupations take parts of its work away, or when the capital requirements of its work gradually force it to be organised in different ways (Abbott, 1998: 432).

3.3.2.2 Debates over the faculty status of academic librarians

The literature shows that there is no consensus about the perceptions surrounding the faculty status of the academic librarian. Hosburgh (2011) established that there are two schools of thought: "those who believe that academic librarians should not work under the title of faculty, while there are others who think that academic librarians have transitioned to faculty status and "must do anything in their power to keep it". Some critics have chastised academic librarians for justifying faculty status for the sake of remuneration, arguing that academic librarians should seek for faculty status if it improves the quality of library services (Bourg, 2013).

For example, Bryan (2007: 785) is among the writers who agree that academic librarians should have faculty status. He compares the pros and cons of the academic librarian with no faculty status vis-à-vis the academic librarian with faculty status. Bryan (2007: 785) concludes that the option of faculty status is the most preferable because it exemplifies that academic librarians are participating in the educational mission of their institutions and offers a degree of recognition, academic freedom, job security, salary equity, and benefits to academic librarians.

Galbraith, Garrison and Hales (2015) have found that academic librarians with faculty status and those without faculty status agree that teaching faculty do not consider them peers. Both groups firmly believe that they should be involved in campus governance to contribute to policy making to assist in improving the university's quality and environment.

Additionally, Galbraith, Garrison and Hales (2015: 591-592) concluded that faculty status helps academic librarians to reinforce relations with teaching faculty and improves librarians' work quality. While Wyss (2010: 376) found that LIS faculty are neutral regarding the faculty status of the academic librarians, LIS faculty believed that academic librarians should be entitled to the same working conditions as LIS faculty, for instance, sabbaticals, library governance and university governance.

Among the authors who are not convinced that academic librarians deserve faculty status is Perini (2015: 15-31) who compared the historical development of the faculty and the academic library, highlighting their role and identity. Perini (2015) argued that faculty and the university library might have similarities in traits and functions, but that does not make the two equal. Perini (2015: 207-208) concludes that faculty and the library differ because of their different "emphases on research, instruction, and service"; "geography, the hierarchical system of higher education itself, and socially constructed departmental structures limit the spaces that the librarians might interact within".

An alternative approach to faculty status, which is suggested by Mavodza (2014: 99), is that if academic librarians cannot obtain faculty status, they should work towards obtaining teaching status and responsibilities. This approach is closely linked to the image and identity of academic librarians discussed in Section 3.3.1.

The literature found that academic librarians perceived themselves and are also perceived by their communities as teachers, or an integral part of the learning, teaching and research processes (Bell and Shank, 2007; Walter, 2008; Polger and Okamoto, 2010; Chanetsa, 2014; Chikonzo et al., 2014; Mckinney and Wheeler, 2015; Pasipamire, 2015; Chanetsa and Ngulube, 2016; 2017). However, the literature has established there is still a debate over this image and identity, and no consensus has been reached over the prestige and status of academic librarians yet.

3.4 Requisite competencies and skills that support blended librarianship

The job titles and responsibilities of academic librarians are changing to accommodate a blended identity together with its competencies and skills (Research Information Network and the Consortium of Research Libraries, 2007; Corrall and Keates, 2010; Bickley and Corrall, 2011; Raju, 2014). The Council of Europe (1999) defined competence as "the set of knowledge and skills that enable an employee to orient easily in a working field and to solve problems that are linked with their professional role". Conversely, there is no consistency on the competencies that are required of academic librarians engaged in teaching, learning, and research as they may differ from one academic library to the next, because the needs of employers may not tally (Pasipamire, 2012). Writers such as Anwar and Warraich (2013: 33-37) stress that librarians assume two types of skills, the first are core competencies which they acquire during their professional education and the second are specialised which they obtain through operations in their profession.

To achieve their teaching role, Bell and Shank (2007: 33) expect academic librarians to have knowledge of learning theories and strategies to ensure quality instruction (instructional design), the use of appropriate learning technologies and traditional librarianship skills. Among these two (2) roles that embody blended librarianship, Bell and Shank (2007: 33) have placed instructional design as the most important role because it directly connects with their model: academic librarianship by design and design thinking. It is in a recent article authored by Turner (2016: 484-485), who undertook a comparison between the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction (IBSTPI) competencies and the ADDIE model (see **Table 3.1**), where both professional and core competencies of instructional design are presented. The IBSTPI competencies comprise of eighteen (18) performance statements regarding instructional design which have been recommended in learning organisations including libraries (Sims and Koszalka, 2008; Koszalka, Russ-Eft and Reiser, 2013). The IBSTPI competencies are graded as essential, advanced and managerial, and the application of these partitions is dependent on the level of use (Munzenmaier, 2014).

Table 3.1: Essential IBSTPI competencies which are in ADDIE

IBSTPI Competency	***ADDIE***
Communicate effectively in visual, oral, and written form	**X**
Update and improve knowledge, skills, and attitudes pertaining to instructional design and related fields	**-**
Identify and respond to ethical, legal, and political implications of design in the workplace	**-**
Select and use analysis techniques for determining instructional content	**X**
Analyse the characteristics of existing and emerging technologies and their potential use	**X**
Analyse the characteristics of existing and emerging technologies and their potential use	**X**
Use an instructional design and development process appropriate for a given project	**X**
Organise instructional programs and/or products to be designed, developed, and evaluated	**-**
Design instructional interventions	**X**
Select or modify existing instructional materials	**X**
Develop specifications that serve as the basis for media production	**X**
Revise instructional and non-instructional solutions based on data	**X**

Source: (Turner, 2016: 481)

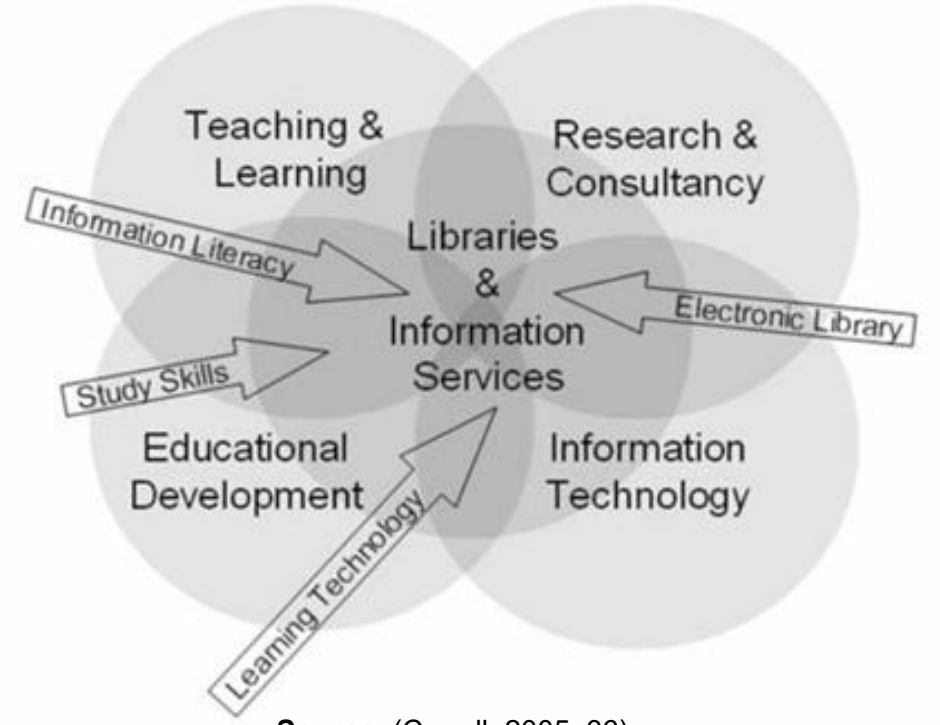
The latest edition of the IBSTPI standards has twenty-two (22) instructional design competencies which are clustered into five (5) domains and are supported by one hundred and five (105) performance statements, which reflect the breadth, depth, and complexity of the field of instructional design rather than competencies expected of an academic librarian (Koszalka, Russ-Eft and Reiser, 2013). Turner (2016: 484-485) adds that the IBSTPI competence standards for instructional design are more comprehensive than the ADDIE model. The researcher's observation is that, the components of instructional technology are also part of the IBSTPI competencies.

It was found that instructional design competencies have not gained acceptance from library employers. For example, Nielsen (2013: 124) found that job advertisement for business librarians required skills in electronic resources (eResources) more than any

other technical skill including instructional design and web design skill requirements. Even so, Nielsen (2013: 124) found that academic librarians ranked the knowledge of Low-threshold Technology Applications (LTA) competencies highly, closely followed by web design skills. Hovious (2013) suggests the following instructional technology skills for academic librarians:

a) PowerPoint not just for presentations but also for interactive tutorials;
b) HTML for basic coding and the ability to read HTML codes to find errors when building websites, wikis, blogs, subject guides, and even YouTube require coding of some sort;
c) Screencasting for presenting e-learning;
d) Learning Analytics for examining big data and to improve student success, with implications for library instruction; and,
e) Cloud-based learning can be used for e-learning, through cloud applications for education, such as Evernote, Zotero, DropBox, Skydrive, StudyBlue, Google Docs, Google Apps for Education, Adobe Creative Cloud and so forth.

Predictions made by Corrall (2005) and Corrall (2010) were that professional specialisms amongst academic librarians are evolving resulting in a blurring and overlap of boundaries between different professions (**see Figure 3.4**) because of the integration of the library into teaching, learning and research. The skills noted by Hovious (2013), Nielsen (2013: 124) and Turner (2016: 484-485), show that the identity of the academic librarian is taking skills that are outside the scope of LIS, borrowing largely from computer and information science and education. Studies such as Shank (2006: 521), Research Information Network and the Consortium of Research Libraries (2007); Walter (2008) and Raju (2017) also reflect that academic libraries and academic librarians, all the same, are highly regarding competencies of instructional design, pedagogical skills and the application of technology into traditional library operations.



Source: (Corrall, 2005: 36)

Figure 3.4: Evolving and overlapping professional specialisms

Although academic librarians have been changing their professional identity to a blended one that cuts across both professional and academic roles and responsibilities (Bell and Shank, 2004, 2007, 2011; Corrall, 2010; Perini, 2015), academic librarians have not been effective in fully implementing blended librarianship. This literature review has found that there is evidence that academic librarians often lack the requisite skills to be blended librarians (Bell and Shank, 2007; Shank and Dewald, 2012), issues of reputation and status have not yet been resolved (Walter, 2008; Bourg, 2013; Langridge, Riggi and Schultz, 2014; Galbraith, Garrison and Hales, 2015; Mckinney and Wheeler, 2015), and the lack of collaboration between faculty and the library (Sewell, 1983; Sharan, 2010) often impedes the acquisition of skills.

3.4.1 On-the-job training and development

Literature supports the view that new entrants into academic librarianship are rarely prepared through formal education to practise in academic libraries (Pasipamire, 2012; 2015; Davies-Hoffman et al., 2013; Munyoro, 2014; Raju, 2014, 2017; Chanetsa and

Ngulube, 2016, 2017). For example, Wyss (2010) found that faculty members of American Library Association (ALA) accredited library schools did not agree that the Masters in Library Science (MLIS) degree prepares students to work in academic libraries. Therefore, Wyss (2010: 382-385) suggests that there is a pertinent need for new academic librarians to gain additional training to fit into their job roles. There is a need for new entrants, especially in Zimbabwean academic libraries, to receive training, since employment trends show that academic libraries appear to be the primary employer of graduates in LIS (Pasipamire, 2012; Mugwisi and Hikwa, 2015).

The works that the researcher read also suggested that library practices move at a faster pace than the formal library education (Pollack and Brown, 1998; Lohman, 2000: 84; Corrall, 2005, 2010; Pasipamire, 2012; Cox and Corrall, 2013; Chikonzo et al., 2014; Munyoro, 2014), hence there is a need for new entrants and existing academic librarians who work in fast-paced organisations to gain some competencies that prepare them for future roles.

Informal learning is needed for academic librarians to keep up with the changes in higher education and ICTs, maintaining professional competence by keeping up-to-date with current the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to function effectively in their profession (Lamptey and Corletey, 2011). Informal learning which takes place in social processes or situated activity is often called Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) [discussed in detail in Section 2.2.1]. Lave and Wenger (1991) have argued that new entrants into a profession, that is, academic librarianship, participate in CoPs and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the socio-cultural practices of the community through mentorship.

In this manner, workplace learning take the form of participation in work activities and prioritise the social dimensions of learning whether communal and/or organisational (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2003: 3-4). A finding from James, Rayner and Bruno (2015: 536-537), shows that LIS graduates and novice academic librarians generally prefer informal mentorship to formal mentorship to gain experience of the job, because of its

flexibility in building strong relationships. As a cautionary statement, James, Rayner and Bruno (2015: 536-537) inform that mentorship is dependent on the initiative and openness on the part of the mentor, and where it is missing novices may face challenges in the socialisation process. Regardless of these shortcomings, Pollack and Brown (1998) noted that informal learning at the workplace:

a) Influences the need to promote the profession against stereotypes;
b) Develops the self-directed learning style of librarians; and,
c) Indicates a strong determination to find resources necessary and peer support/opportunities to network.

3.5 Significant events leading to blended librarianship

Significant events may be taken to mean symptoms that blended librarianship is occurring in academic libraries. Each significant event is supported by the literature discussed in the previous sections, and a critique is given where there are gaps, contradictions, omissions in the literature, and the implication that the critique has on the data collection and analysis. In sum, the significant events that show the transition of academic librarians to blended librarianship can be summarised by discussing:

a) The dynamic roles of the academic librarian (instructional design and instructional technologist) which now cut across academic and professional identities; and,
b) The increasing importance of ILS and library instruction in higher education.

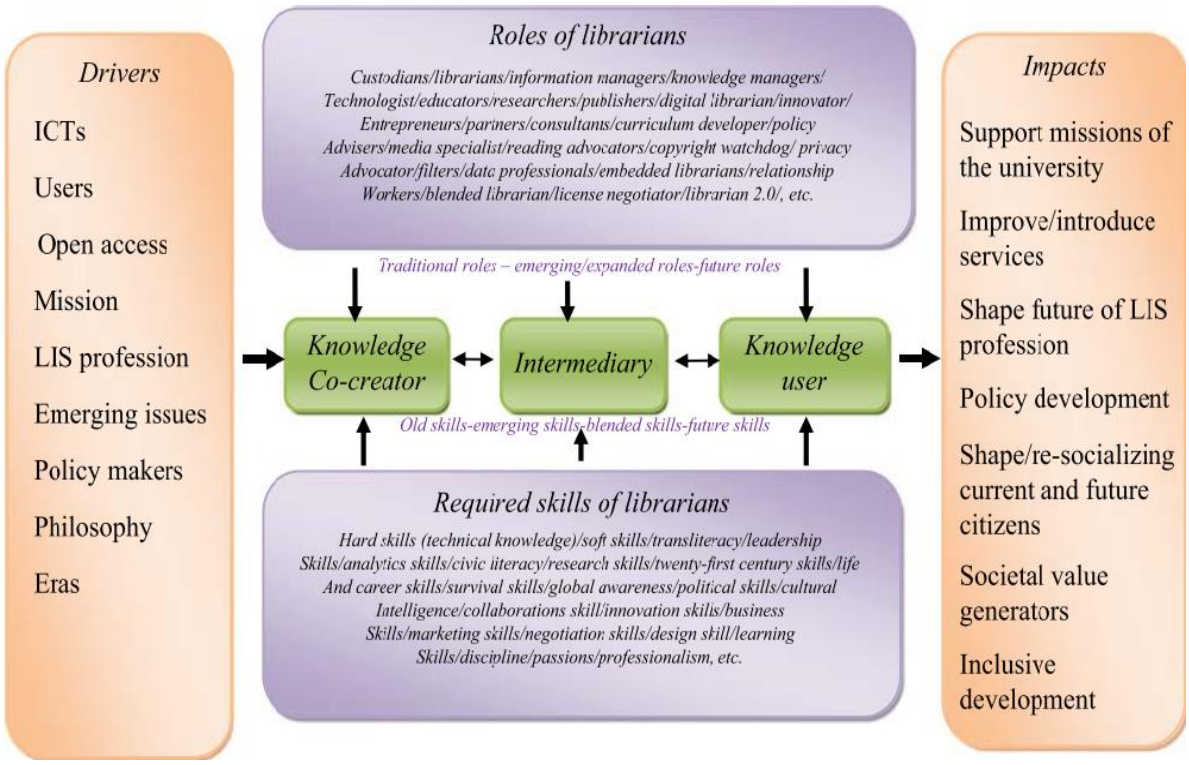
Academic librarians are adopting aspects of blended librarianship as a means of delivering better services to their community, to reduce their marginalisation, and to integrate ICTs; retool and reshape the academic librarian's roles (Bell and Shank, 2004, 2007; Corrall, 2005; Corrall and Keates, 2010; Pasipamire, 2012; Perini, 2015; Al-Fadhli, Corrall and Cox, 2016). Viewed in this way, blended librarianship presents an infinite number of challenges to academic libraries as they must cross clear and easy-to-maintain personal and social boundaries of academic libraries and the college or university socio-cultural and socio-political environment.

As a result of straddling between both academic and non-academic duties, the academic librarian's role and functions have been in constant flux. To become relevant to their communities, the academic librarian has over the past five decades constantly changed roles, for example, from reference services librarianship to subject librarianship, and from subject librarianship to embedded librarianship and from embedded librarianship to more recently blended librarianship (Bell and Shank, 2004, 2007, 2011; Corrall and Keates, 2010; Chanetsa, 2014; Perini, 2015).

The literature has also found that the 21st century academic librarian identifies with the professional identity of a teacher, clearly reflecting the value of ILS, instructional design and instructional technologist (Bell and Shank, 2004, 2007, 2011; Shank, 2006; Sinclair, 2009; Shank and Dewald, 2012; Perini, 2015; Mullins, 2016). ILS is no longer delivered as a one-shot instruction, but has become embedded into courses whether online or in the physical state, where the academic librarian has to take part in the coursework of students and searches and retrieves resources for students and faculty (Tumbleson and Burke, 2009, 2016; Mnkeni-Saurombe, 2015; Moore et al., 2015). ILS delivered outside one-shot instruction creates opportunities for academic librarians to use their instructional design and instructional technologist roles through the delivery of customised ILS services, for example, for a specific course or assignment. Silk et al. (2015) and Farkas (2015) have found that students are highly likely to engage library resources when they are placed in their eLMS, rather than through face-to-face interactions where they may not have their laptops or ready access to the Internet.

Though it may sound reasonable to change roles, each change has needed reorganisation, change in work patterns, and demand for new skills, job retraining and reclassification of positions in the academic library, of which each factor identified above has come with its set of challenges (Krubu and Osawaru, 2011; Chanetsa, 2014; Perini, 2015; Chanetsa and Ngulube, 2016, 2017; Raju, 2017).

Figure 3.5 from a study conducted by Cherinet (2018: 95) shows some significant events that have led to blended librarians, their corresponding roles and skills needed for academic librarians, and the resultant impact of these factors.



Source: (Cherinet, 2018: 95)

Figure 3.5: Significant events in blended librarianship and their impacts

However, there is little evidence suggesting whether academic librarian's transition to blended librarians has had much impact on the classroom. Research that has attempted to interrogate the role and functions of the academic librarians in the university area show that faculty is divided with regards to academic librarians' participation in the classroom (Research Information Network and the Consortium of Research Libraries (2007); Tumbleson and Burke, 2009, 2016). Faculties in the university have been seen to be less willing to let the academic librarians take part in their classroom. The model of the blended professional, on which blended librarianship is built , comes from the work of the school librarian who is regarded as a part teacher and part librarian (Whitchurch, 2009; Corrall,

2010); however, the nature of higher education disciplines and the bureaucracy prevalent in higher education impede the model's implementation (Smith, 2006).

What also exacerbates the implementation of blended librarianship is the realisation that academic libraries do not share the same perspective with regards to the qualifications to practise, let alone job responsibilities (perhaps mirroring the opinions of library administrators or university missions) (Martin, 1996; Rodwell, 2001; Oakleaf, 2011). Also, some academic librarians may not have a vision or mission that suits blended librarianship (Oakleaf, 2011). This is not surprising considering that Salisbury and Grif (2014) highlight that the available literature about the articulation of the library's mission, vision, and core values statements is relatively low. Job descriptions and vacancies may be used as alternative indicators of an organisation's direction towards a professional goal which may be either formalised or informal awaiting official recognition. For example, Shank (2006) and recently Raju (2017) examines the job postings of roles which fit into blended librarianship, noting that few post job adverts integrate instructional design and instructional technology.

3.6 Summary of the chapter

This chapter began by critically exploring how blended librarianship is adopted in academic libraries through its major discourses such as reference services librarianship, subject librarianship, and embedded librarianship. Within this context, blended librarianship has been introduced into academic libraries to reassert the role of the academic librarian who has become peripheral due to the advances in technology and the socio-cultural and socio-political history of higher education institutions.

The chapter went on to discuss the literature regarding the image, status, identity and prestige of academic librarians in higher learning institutions. The literature has found that practising academic librarians (in some parts of the world, at the least) now identify themselves as faculty and have been contesting for the same recognition as lecturers through the lobbying of standards such as the ARCL standards for the faculty status for academic librarians. This chapter found that there are two camps of academic librarians:

those who feel they need faculty status for financial advancement and because they want faculty to recognise their role in the learning, research and teaching process; and the other camp of academic librarians does not want faculty status because of the work demands that are placed on them.

The chapter also discussed the requisite skills that support blended librarianship and on-the-job training and development. The discussion on these enabling conditions was interpolated through the socio-cultural history of academic librarians.

The chapter was concluded by critiquing the literature review topics discussed to find out the significant events in blended librarianship and the gaps within its discourse. This critique of the literature also helped the researcher in shaping the theoretical framework, and in designing the research instruments used to collect data from the participants through the phenomenological research tradition that has shaped this study. The upcoming chapter presents the research methodology that was used to collect data, taking into consideration the literature presented in this chapter to develop research instruments, data collection methods and plans for analysis.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction and overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how the professional identity of Zimbabwean academic librarians is evolving to become blended librarianship. The researcher assumed that by understanding how academic librarians have become blended librarians, the study can understand how effectively they adhere to their dynamic roles and functions, and how they are perceived in the university. In seeking to understand this phenomenon, the study was guided by the following research questions:

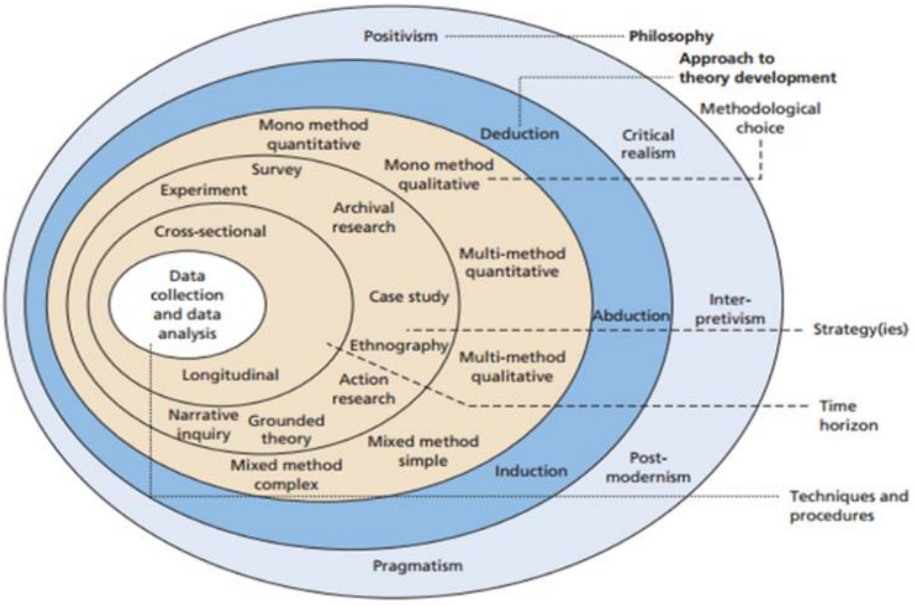
- How have Zimbabwean academic librarians adopted blended librarianship?
- What are the interpretive repertoires used by Zimbabwean academic librarians to define their blended roles in the institutional work they conduct?
- What are the competencies that facilitate blended librarianship in Zimbabwean higher education institutions?
- What are the significant events experienced in the institutional work of academic librarians that have that have contributed in transforming academic librarians into blended librarians?

This chapter provides a methodology that guided the collection of data amongst the selected Zimbabwean academic librarians to support the arguments from Chapter 1-3 and to build the ground for successive chapters which analysed data and drew conclusions on the research questions.

The methodology chapter is where the research design, information needed and sources of data, the research sample, plans and methods for data collection and data analysis, and the rationale for the methods used, are located (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012: 100).

The methodology can be seen as a study of methods that can draw out all philosophical questions to validate this researcher's claims to knowledge (Fisher et al., 2007: 39-40). The researcher used the term research methodology to refer to the actions to explain, describe and make conclusions about the phenomena under study.

The researcher utilised some of the parts in the research onion (**Figure 4.1**), developed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016: 132), to construct the steps that were taken to develop the study's research methodology. The authors of the research onion gave guidance that the centre depicts the issues underlying the choice of data collection techniques and analysis procedures that the researcher used. In coming to this central point, the researcher explained the choices that he made so that readers can follow through the researcher's methods to study the research problem. Berg and Lune (2012: 22-25) agree with this position when they assert that issues of the methodology cannot be examined in a vacuum, as they need to bear the methods, theory and substantive interests about a study.



Source: (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016: 164)

Figure 4.1: The research onion

4.2 Research philosophy and approach

A research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012: 59); Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016: 151), a research philosophy has the following:

a) Assumptions about how human knowledge is acquired (epistemological assumptions);
b) The realities that the researcher will encounter through the research (ontological assumptions);
c) The extent and ways the researcher's values influence the research process (axiological assumptions); and,
d) The processes for studying knowledge (methodology).

This study was framed through the philosophy of interpretivism. The basic tenet of interpretivism is that reality is socially, culturally, and historically constructed (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012: 60). Interpretivism purports that partially shared meanings and experiences are dependent on people's interpretation of the events that occur around them (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016: 130). This research philosophy does not follow the perspective that absolute truths are somewhere "out there" in the world, waiting to be discovered (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015: 26). Furthermore, interpretivism bears the ontological assumption that accepts meanings as varied and multiple (Creswell, 2013: 39-40). Therefore, the researcher had to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or idea.

To analyse the complexity of academic librarians' views, this study took into consideration the academic librarians' social and historical environment. When collecting data about the academic librarians, the researcher's epistemological assumption was that he had to become part of the academic librarians to collect information as an "insider" (Denscombe, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Leedy and Ormrod, 2015; Patton, 2015). As an insider, the researcher was able to delve into the 'processes' of blended librarianship among individuals and the situated 'contexts' in which they interact. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012:

61) suggest that interpretivism should be used to study specific contexts in which people live and work to understand their cultural and historical settings.

Using interpretivism to underpin this study, the researcher acted as an instrument in the research (Kvale, 1996; Brinkmann, 2013), conducting the survey and interviews (at times with the help of a research assistant) and interacting with the academic librarians. An interpretivist worldview in this study determined how the researcher relied on the academic librarian's experience of blended librarianship to respond to the research problem. Therefore, the researcher investigated the social and historical spaces of academic librarians to determine how these experiences are negotiated for academic librarians to develop blended roles. Thus, Creswell (2013: 39-40) realises that interpretivism is consistent with the phenomenological research tradition that is used in the study because they both relate to investigations about human experiences.

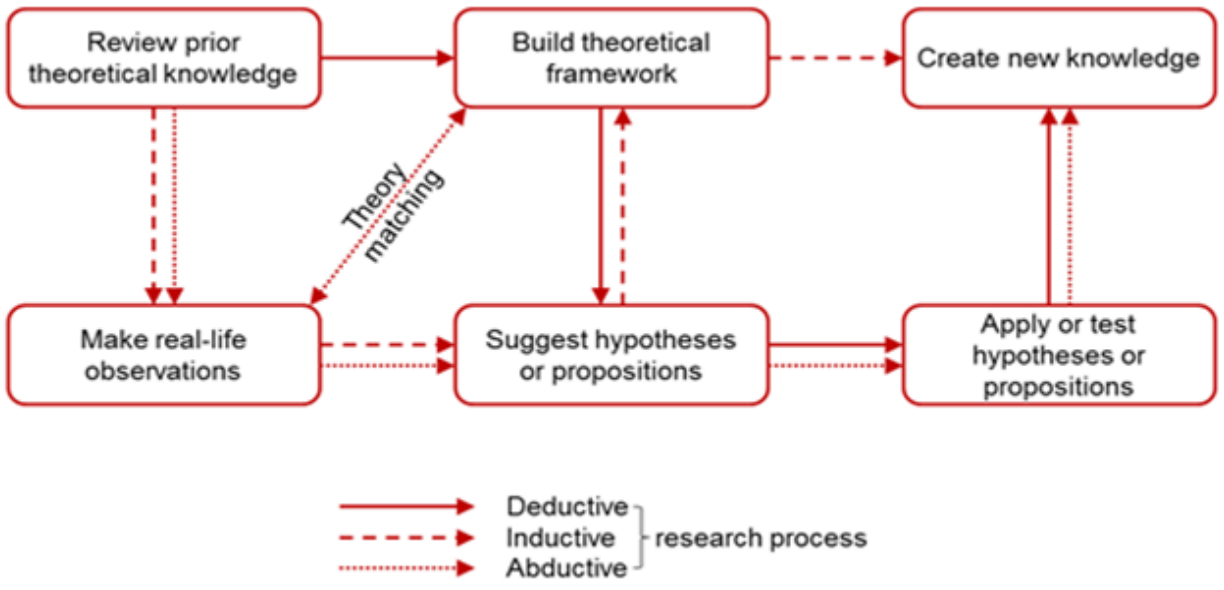
The researcher noted the importance of acknowledging his beliefs and biases throughout this phenomenological study (Creswell, 2013: 39), to allow readers to understand the researcher's positions which have been suspended. For the researcher to avoid bias when bringing in subjectivism into the study, he had to use bracketing (see Section 4.8.1), to highlight all prior personal knowledge and let the data emerge from the experiences of the participants (Lopez and Willis, 2004: 725-733) and the literature related to the phenomena (Wojnar and Swanson, 2007: 174). Bracketing was taken by the researcher to be more an interplay between reflexive and objective processes because in the phenomenological research tradition phenomena occurred that researcher was not initially aware of (Ahern, 1999: 408).

4.3 Characteristics of the approach to theory development: deduction

To connect the theoretical framework and the literature review for the study, the researcher was explicit about the research approach that is taken towards theory development or advancing knowledge (Spens and Kovács, 2006: 374). The rationale to call this section theory development lies in the argument brought forward by Spens and Kovács (2006: 374-376), Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007: 26) and Saunders, Lewis and

Thornhill (2016: 145), that researchers must be conscious and explicit about the use of theory in a study, that is, whether they have used deductive, inductive or abductive logic.

This study adopted the deductive approach to theory development as it explored blended librarianship from the onset, then used Lave and Wenger's (1991) LPP to construct the research questions pertaining to blended librarianship (see Chapter 2), and then collected data in the real world to test the research questions, and then verified whether blended librarianship is practised in Zimbabwe and the extent to which it is practised. Rather than moving from data to theory (as in induction) and back and forth between data and theory (as in abduction), the researcher used deduction to move from theory to data (abstract generalisations to specifics about blended librarianship). **Figure. 4.2** shows the logical steps that were taken by the researcher in terms of deduction as compared to induction and abduction (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016: 148).



Source: (Spens and Kovács, 2006: 376)

Figure 4.2: Abductive, inductive and deductive reasoning

Deductive reasoning is not only suited for quantitative studies but may be applied to qualitative research designs (Hyde, 2000; Spens and Kovács, 2006). This study used multiple cases which lie in a continuum of blended librarianship (to gain more robust, generalizable, and testable findings) and a deductive analysis to approach the data (Hyde, 2000: 80; Pope, Ziebland and Mays, 2000: 114; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007: 27).

A research design is defined by Plano-Clark and Creswell (2015: 192) as a logical set of procedures that researchers use to collect, analyse, and report their data in a research study. Though some authors tend to put qualitative research as inductive (beginning with no theoretical focus), the emergent nature of the qualitative research makes it abductive.

The researcher realised that qualitative research may go back and forth through the conceptual framework, literature review, data collection, and analysis. This iterative procedure is defined by Leedy and Ormrod (2015: 309) as the constant comparative method. Patton (2015: 51) also asserts that qualitative research has the flexibility that offers responsiveness and adaptability within a study. In tandem, Bloomberg and Volpe (2012: 76), have argued that qualitative research can be emergent and evolving because it occurs in naturalistic settings which are seen as holistic and complex, and as such, they rely on abductive reasoning to move dialectically and iteratively between deduction and induction.

4.3.1 The application of qualitative research in this study

Qualitative research arose from a current and unsettled critique over quantitative research (Flick, 2009: 24). Quantitative research can be defined as research methodology based on the concept of quantity that accounts for amounts in phenomena (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015: 100). Quantification has the advantages of making observations more explicit, providing the ability to aggregate, compare, and summarise data and the possibility of using statistical analyses (Babbie, 2013: 25).

Qualitative research has been defined by Leedy and Ormrod (2015: 269) and Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) as an umbrella term that relates to a wide variety of approaches to the study of natural social life. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) have taken qualitative research to encompass a variety of traditions or genres each distinguished by specific forms, terms, focus and assumptions about what constitutes inquiry. In short, Saldaña (2011: 4) describes qualitative research to collect information or data which consists of:

> …textual materials such as interview transcripts, field notes, moreover, documents, and/ or visual materials such as artefacts, photographs, video recordings, and Internet sites, that document human experiences about others and/or one's self in social action and reflexive states.

The qualitative method dissects into two research perspectives: the interpretive and the critical (Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer, 2012: 31). The interpretive perspective which includes the phenomenology that was used in this study assumed that people can create their meanings in interaction with the world around them. The qualitative method is consistent with LPP because qualitative research does not aggregate or average individuals to explain phenomena but seeks to find the meaning and value that academic librarians assign to events. The critical perspective of qualitative research draws on most of the same paradigms as the interpretive view by recognising that reality is constructed through the meaning individuals give to a particular phenomenon (Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer, 2012: 31). The difference between interpretive and critical perspectives is the critical theorist's focus on power relations in society's structures and processes (Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer, 2012: 31).

4.4 The research tradition of phenomenology

The researcher still followed the research onion by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), but changed the terminology from research strategy to research tradition to suit the terminology of qualitative research as suggested by Creswell (2013). Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) argue that the term research strategy should not be used in qualitative research and instead insist on research tradition. The research tradition that the researcher has used in the study is phenomenology.

The literature established that phenomenology began in Europe during the 20th century, as a major movement in philosophy and the humanities (Adams and Van Manen, 2008). The early tenets of phenomenology are found in the work of the German philosopher Edmund Husserl, who studied how people describe things and experience them through their senses (Patton, 2015: 116). Husserl's basic philosophical assumption was that people derive experiences by paying attention to perceptions and meanings in their conscious mind (Patton, 2015: 116). The term phenomenology has various definitions and meanings attached to it, depending on the theoretical and practical contexts (Adams and Van Manen, 2008: 614; Wertz et al., 2011:52). Phenomenology, then, attempts to "reduce" how people make sense of the world into a description of the universal essence (that is, a "grasp of the very nature of the thing" (Creswell, 2013: 79).

Husserl's work inspired different scholars to come up with their version of the phenomenological research traditions such as the following noted by Adams and Van Manen (2008: 614-615):

a) Transcendental phenomenology by Husserl;
b) Existential phenomenology or interpretive phenomenology from Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Simone de Beauvoir;
c) Hermeneutic phenomenology by Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur;
d) Linguistic phenomenology from French post-structuralist work of Maurice Blanchot, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault; and,
e) Ethical phenomenology by Emmanuel Levinas and Alphonso Lingis.

All these variations of phenomenology have a commonality of studying the lived experiences of people and appreciate that experiences are part of human consciousness (Creswell, 2013: 80). Furthermore, these variations of phenomenology seek to develop of descriptions of the essences rather than report experiences explanations or analyses (Creswell, 2013: 80). In the same manner, Patton (2015: 115) also attempts to reconcile the various standpoints of phenomenology, when he observes that they explore "how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as a shared meaning". Having introduced what phenomenology is,

and its historical background, the next section discusses the philosophical assumptions of phenomenology and how they were applied in the study.

4.4.1 The philosophical assumptions of phenomenology

The following philosophical assumptions identified by Wertz et al. (2011: 127) and Creswell (2013: 80), guide the phenomenological research tradition:

a) **A return to the traditional tasks of philosophy** - thus limiting the exploration of the world through "scientism" or empirical means (Creswell, 2013: 80). Husserl is said to have disapproved the universalisation of empirical methods and encouraged different but equally rigorous methods tailored to study subjectivity and matters of human experiences (Wertz et al., 2011: 126). Therefore, phenomenology was appropriate for this study since it sought to explore the experiences of academic librarians.

b) **A philosophy without presuppositions** - phenomenology requires researchers to suspend all judgments about a phenomenon until there is a more certain (Creswell, 2013: 80). "Bracketing" prior knowledge of blended librarianship allowed the researcher to attend to what Husserl called the "lifeworld" and to freshly reflect on concrete examples of blended librarianship among the academic librarian's experiences (Wertz et al., 2011: 125). The researcher had to bracket prior assumptions about the study and let conclusions emerge from the literature, theoretical framework and findings (see Sections 4.2, 4.8.1).

c) **The intentionality of consciousness** - phenomenology assumes that consciousness is always directed toward an object. That is, people interpret reality through objects, and that interpretation becomes a consciousness of its own kind (Creswell, 2013: 80). This means that each object can have a separate interpretation, and therefore a separate reality from different people altogether. Furthermore, the intentionality of consciousness can describe the "how" and the "what" of experience. That is how experiential processes progress and what is experienced through them (Wertz et al., 2011: 126).

d) **The refusal of the subject-object dichotomy** - phenomenology takes the assumption of the intentionality of consciousness a step further and proposes that the reality of an object is only perceived within the meaning of the experience of an individual (Creswell, 2013: 80). This is also known as the "epoché" or "phenomenological reduction" (Wertz et al., 2011: 125).

Accordingly, the phenomenological tradition required the researcher to use methodologies that carefully capture and describe how academic librarians have experienced blended librarianship. That is, how they perceive, describe, feel, judge, remember, make sense, and talk with others about blended librarianship (Creswell, 2013: 83; Patton, 2015: 115). Hence, the following section delves into the application of the conceptual, philosophical and practical issues of phenomenology in a study of blended librarianship.

4.4.1.1 The application of phenomenology in the study

Lopez and Willis (2004: 726) and Van Manen (2017: 775) advise that a researcher must be explicit about the type of phenomenology used in a study because the research findings generated will depend on the phenomenological tradition and its accompanying philosophical assumptions. In a simple manner, the phenomenology that was applied in this study is interpretive phenomenology.

Unlike descriptive phenomenology, that attempts to produce an objective statement about an event, interpretive phenomenology, explores personal experience and is concerned with an individual's account of an object or event (Smith and Osborn, 2007: 53). Interpretive phenomenology is based on the philosophical assumptions set forth by Heidegger that human experience can be understood by going beyond the mere description of significant statements in conversations to look for meanings embedded in common life practices (or experiences) through methods such as hermeneutics (Lopez and Willis, 2004: 729). Therefore, interpretive phenomenological analysis is a two-stage interpretation process, where the "participants are trying to make sense of their world" and the "researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world" (Smith and Osborn, 2007: 53; Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2012: 362).

For the researcher to apply the philosophical assumptions of interpretive phenomenology, he had to determine if blended librarianship was occurring amongst the selected academic librarians by carefully studying if their experiences were within the tasks of blended librarianship. For example, the researcher had to conceptualise blended

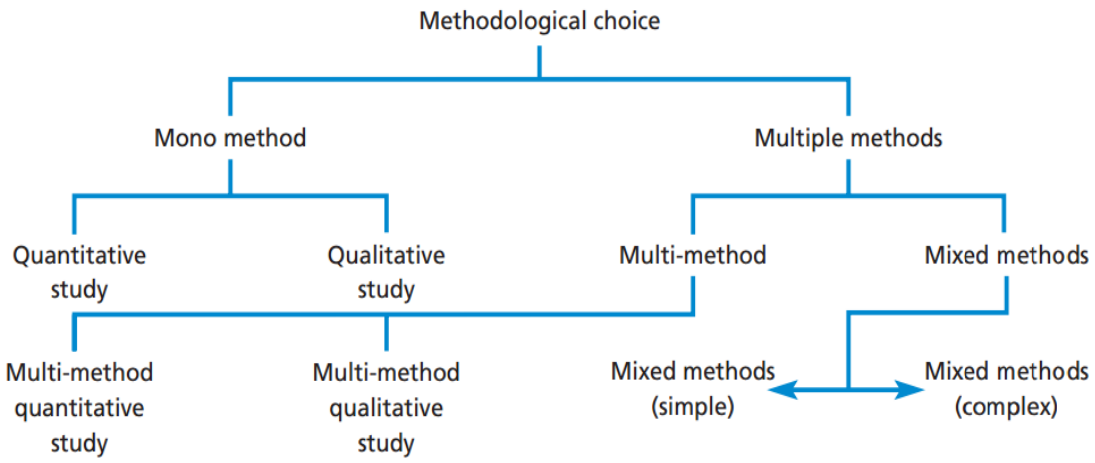
librarianship as any task performed by an academic librarian that merged traditional librarianship roles with either instructional technologist skills or instructional designer roles.

If the characteristics of blended librarianship were present in an academic librarian, then it was taken that the academic librarian had experienced blended librarianship. In addition, the researcher took note of Wertz et al's. (2011: 127) recommendations that experiences are not the same amongst individuals, as experiences can entail many levels and situations wherein they can occur. Consequently, the researcher had to present data about the academic librarian's experience of blended librarianship in "specific contextual parameters such as at very high levels, at typical mid-levels, and/ or at lower, more context-bound levels" (Wertz et al., 2011: 127) as shown in **Table 4.4** (see Section 4.9). In addition, the researcher took the academic librarian's accounts (often presented in paragraphs with italics and quotation marks) and then examined each individual narrative or exemplify it within a theme.

4.5 Methodological choice: the multi-methods qualitative research

This study relied more on qualitative data and techniques and used mostly qualitative methods for data presentation and analysis. The study was a multi-methods qualitative study since it used more than one data collection procedure associated with the qualitative method but did not mix qualitative methods with quantitative methods.

Multi-methods qualitative research, differs significantly from mixed methods research because it does not require the inquirer to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches into the data collection and analysis in a single study (Brewer and Hunter (2006). A multi-methods qualitative study was preferred by the researcher because it combined a variety of research methods (**see Figure 4.3**). With regards to a multi-methods study, the researcher identified, explored, and understood different dimensions of the units of study to strengthen the findings and enriching interpretation.



Source: (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016: 166)

Figure 4.3: A chart highlighting methodological choices

The rationale for using multi-methods in this study came from Hammersley (2008) who observed that multi-methods could be used to construct the social world in diverse ways to increase the completeness of the picture. Brewer and Hunter (2006) have also recognised that multi-methods reduce the uncertainty of employing a single type of research method by testing alternative interpretations of data to increase the validity of the study's findings. Multi-methods are therefore complementary to the research's ontological position (that the study relied on the experiences of the academic librarians) to bring into focus multiple perspectives of the research problem.

4.6 Population and sampling procedures

The researcher collected data from a population of 136 academic librarians from the BUSE, CUT, LSU, MSU, NUST, and PHSBL80 Library. These university libraries had been selected through the researcher's judgement about which universities will be the most useful for the study to provide participants who had experienced phenomenology. This type of sampling is referred to as purposive sampling, that is selecting a sample "on the basis of knowledge of a population, its elements, and the purpose of the study"

(Babbie, 2013: 128). A sample is a "representation of a population from which it is selected, and a sample has the characteristics that approximate those of the population under study" (Bloor and Wood, 2006: 262). **Table 4.1** shows the composition of the academic librarians targeted for data collection, and that included Senior Library Assistants (who are line workers; n=65), Assistant Librarians (who are middle-level managers; n=39), Systems Librarians, Technology Librarians (who are middle-level managers; n=9), and Library Boards (that comprise of the Head Librarian, Deputy Librarian, and Sub-Librarians; n=23).

Table 4.1: Composition of sampling frame in the study

	NUST	LSU	BUSE	PHSBL80	MSU	CUT	Total
Assistant Librarians, Bibliographic Service Librarians, Senior Assistant Librarians	6	5	5	13	6	4	**39**
Systems Librarians, Technology Librarians	2	1	1	2	2	1	**9**
Technical Assistant, Senior Library Assistants, Chief Library Assistants	12	4	5	23	12	9	**65**
Library Board members	4	3	3	6	4	3	**23**
Total	**24**	**13**	**14**	**44**	**24**	**17**	**136**

The Select Statics Services© (Select Statistical Services, 2017) web tool was used to calculate the sample size and confidence interval of the population of 136 academic librarians that participated in the study. The Select Statics web tool determined that the sample size for a population of 136 academic librarians, was 101, at a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5. The researcher found that the sample size from the Select Statics Services© (Select Statistical Services, 2017) fell within the guidelines set by Bartlett, Kotrlik and Higgins (2001: 49).

Purposive sampling was applied to sample to delineate the participants for the semi-structured questionnaire, the interview protocol for academic librarians, the interview protocol for Library Board members (see **Table 4.2**). One institution had not replied to grant the researcher access up to the time of writing up this study (discussed as **PHSBL80 Library** to protect its identity and respondents, see Section 4.10.3). Hence, the semi-structured questionnaire was sent out to 79 academic librarians (including librarians from PHSBL80 Library who agreed to participate), instead of the intended sample size of 101. Fifty-nine (59) questionnaires were returned; hence the **return rate** of the survey was **75 %**.

Table 4.2: Distribution of instruments to the sample

Instrument	Target group	Total
Semi-structured questionnaire for academic librarians	Assistant Librarians, Technical Assistant, Senior Library Assistants, Chief Library Assistants, Bibliographic Service Librarians, Senior Assistant Librarians, Systems Librarians Technology Librarians	**80**
Interview protocol for academic librarians	Assistant Librarians and Systems Librarians	**18**
Interview protocol for library boards librarians	Head Librarian, Deputy Librarian and Sub-Librarians	**3**

Creswell (2013: 84) suggested that researchers, who conduct phenomenological studies, should rely on criterion sampling so that all the respondents who have experienced the phenomena under study are selected. The researcher followed the principles of Leedy and Ormrod, (2015: 270) who perceived that phenomenological researchers should have a typical sample size of 5 to 25 individuals, all of whom should have had direct experience with the phenomenon being studied.

Therefore, the researcher also relied on data saturation to delimit the number of academics librarians who were interviewed. Saunders et al. (2017: 1894) define data saturation as “a criterion for discontinuing data collection”. In applying data saturation, the researcher took note of advice from Kelle (2004: 261) that the ‘sample size’ is not the main criterion in qualitative sampling but it is ‘case contrast’ (that is, possibility of identifying patterns by means of multiple comparisons between deliberately chosen individual cases) in order to generalise the findings (Murray, 2014: 591).

In selecting the Assistant Librarians and the Library Board members, the researcher only interviewed Assistant Librarians who practice blended librarianship, and Library Board members who worked with them. The researcher also heeded that he should not exceed twenty-five (25) interviewees, and then worked at interviewing three (3) Library Board members and seventeen (18) Assistant Librarians.

4.7 Data collection procedures and methods

The researcher administered a research dashboard which acted as a criterion for admissibility of the data into research design for each method. Leedy and Ormrod (2015: 385) have explained that a standard for admissibility of data narrows the researcher's attention to data that may solve the research problem.

The researcher went through the literature review before designing each data collection instrument so that each instrument recorded enough content for analysis that matched the research questions in Section 1.7 . The researcher used the latest edition of the IBSTPI standards mentioned in Section 3.4 to determine the instructional design competencies needed for blended librarianship. Studies such as Corrall (2005), Shank (2006), Research Information Network and the Consortium of Research Libraries (2007), Walter (2008), Corrall (2010), Nielsen (2013), Hovious (2013) and Turner (2016), were used to determine the information technology competencies of blended librarianship. Other key categories that examined the experiences of blended librarianship and their interpretive repertoire were drawn from Shank (2006), Bell and Shank (2007), Shank and

Dewald (2012), York and Vance (2009), Julien and Pecoskie (2009), Richardson (2010), Corrall and Keates (2010), Perini (2015), Al-Fadhli, Corrall and Cox (2016), and Chanetsa and Ngulube (2016).

The researcher relied on document research, a semi-structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to collect data. This triangulation of the data collection instruments was helpful in reconciling of information gathered from the semi-structured questionnaires, interviews, and document review. Triangulation is a term that is analogous to land surveys, where the surveyor gets a fix on his position by taking a bearing on two different landmarks (Bloor and Wood, 2006: 170). When different sources are used for cross-validating and cross-fertilising research procedures, findings, and theories, this form of triangulation is known as “data triangulation” (Brewer and Hunter, 2006: 6). One data collection method was not enough to provide the data needed to test the study’s results and conclusions, hence data triangulation of different research instruments was used strengthen the findings and enrich their interpretations.

The researcher used multi-methods of data triangulation in the following chronological order. Firstly, the researcher utilised document research to collect the social background data of academic libraries in the sample. Secondly, a survey of academic librarians was conducted to gauge the academic librarian’s experiences of blended librarianship. Thirdly, the researcher selected a corpus of academic librarians, based on the results of the survey, to participate in the semi-structured interview.

4.7.1 Document research

Documents are usually naturally occurring objects with a concrete and semi-permanent existence and can indirectly reveal the social world of their creators (Payne and Payne, 2004: 60). Flick (2009: 254) recommended that the researcher can use purposive sampling to select a corpus of documents that are representative of the problem under study. The researcher relied on the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (ZULC) guidelines and standards (Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (ZULC), 2016) because it administers all the state universities that participated in the study. Some of the

limitations of document research that have been identified by Payne and Payne (2004: 65) can be summarised as the failure to meet the four criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. The researcher countered this shortfall by using guidelines that were officially from ZULC and only relied on the sections that were relevant to blended librarianship.

4.7.2 Research instruments

This study has used self-reports for the semi-structured questionnaire and the semi-structured interview. For example, a semi-structured questionnaire was developed to fit in checklists and inventories of certain behaviours that are in line with the blended librarian and the respondents were asked to rate their behaviours through scales with a qualitative value (see Appendix 9). Each research instrument was sub-divided using the research questions set out in Section 1.7 (Kvale, 1996: 129–131).

4.7.2.1 The semi-structured questionnaire

A questionnaire is defined by Kumar (2011) as a written list of questions, wherein the answers are recorded by respondents. In this study, the only difference between an interview schedule and the questionnaire was that the former required the researcher to ask the questions (and if necessary, explain them) and record the academic librarian's replies on an interview transcript, while in the latter's care, replies were recorded by the respondents themselves.

In constructing the questionnaire (see Appendix 9), the researcher combined both closed and open-ended questions. For the closed questions, the researcher summarised aspects of blended librarianship into brief statements in the form of checklists and asked academic librarians whether they agree or disagree with the checklists and put rating scales of the statements on the checklist. The open-ended questions gave the academic librarians an opportunity to provide their own answers to the questions (Babbie, 2013: 231), and an opportunity to discuss some of the salient issues of the study in detail.

The semi-structured questionnaires offered the advantage of reaching many academic librarians, including those with busy work schedules, saving the researcher travel expenses and time conducting interviews. The questionnaires also aided in maintaining the academic librarian's anonymity. One of the disadvantages of the semi-structured questionnaires that the researcher encountered was the lack of an opportunity to clarify issues with the respondents who may not have understood some of the questions. As a result, some of the respondents left some sections of the semi-structured questionnaire unanswered. This researcher did not discard these questionnaires but used the available responses to analyse the findings.

After the survey, the researcher proceeded to collect data through semi-structured interviews with a selected number of academic librarians. This type of data collection procedures where a questionnaire precedes the interview is termed by Adamson et al. (2004) as questerviews.

4.7.2.2. Semi-structured interviews

The researcher used face-to-face interviews to establish rapport with the academic librarians and therefore gain their cooperation (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015: 160). The researcher made appointments with the academic librarians and sent the interview guide (see Appendix 10) in advance.

When interviewing the academic librarians, the researcher used the setting of the academic library as it is a natural environment, and often a space that was not too noisy. The researcher took advice from Kumar (2011) and Brinkmann (2013) wherein interviewing respondents, the researcher had to choose the degree of flexibility to use. In the semi-structured interview, the researcher may follow the standard questions with one or more individually tailored questions to get clarification or probe a person's reasoning (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015: 160). In addition, Brinkmann (2014: 286), avers that the semi-structured interview is at times equated with qualitative interviewing because it can:

a) make better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues by allowing much more leeway for following up on whatever angles are deemed important by the interviewee; as well as,
b) the interviewer has a greater chance of becoming visible as a knowledge-producing participant in the process itself, rather than hiding behind a pre-set interview guide.

The researcher's interview protocol (see Appendix 10) was developed with the above assumption in mind and was administered to academic librarians. Another interview protocol was administered to members of library boards because of their involvement in library administration (see Appendix 11).

The researcher recorded the interview data using a smart recording device and notes jotted by a research assistant. Before recording the interview, the researcher informed the academic librarians and then obtained their permission to record. After the interview, the recordings were transcribed for analysis.

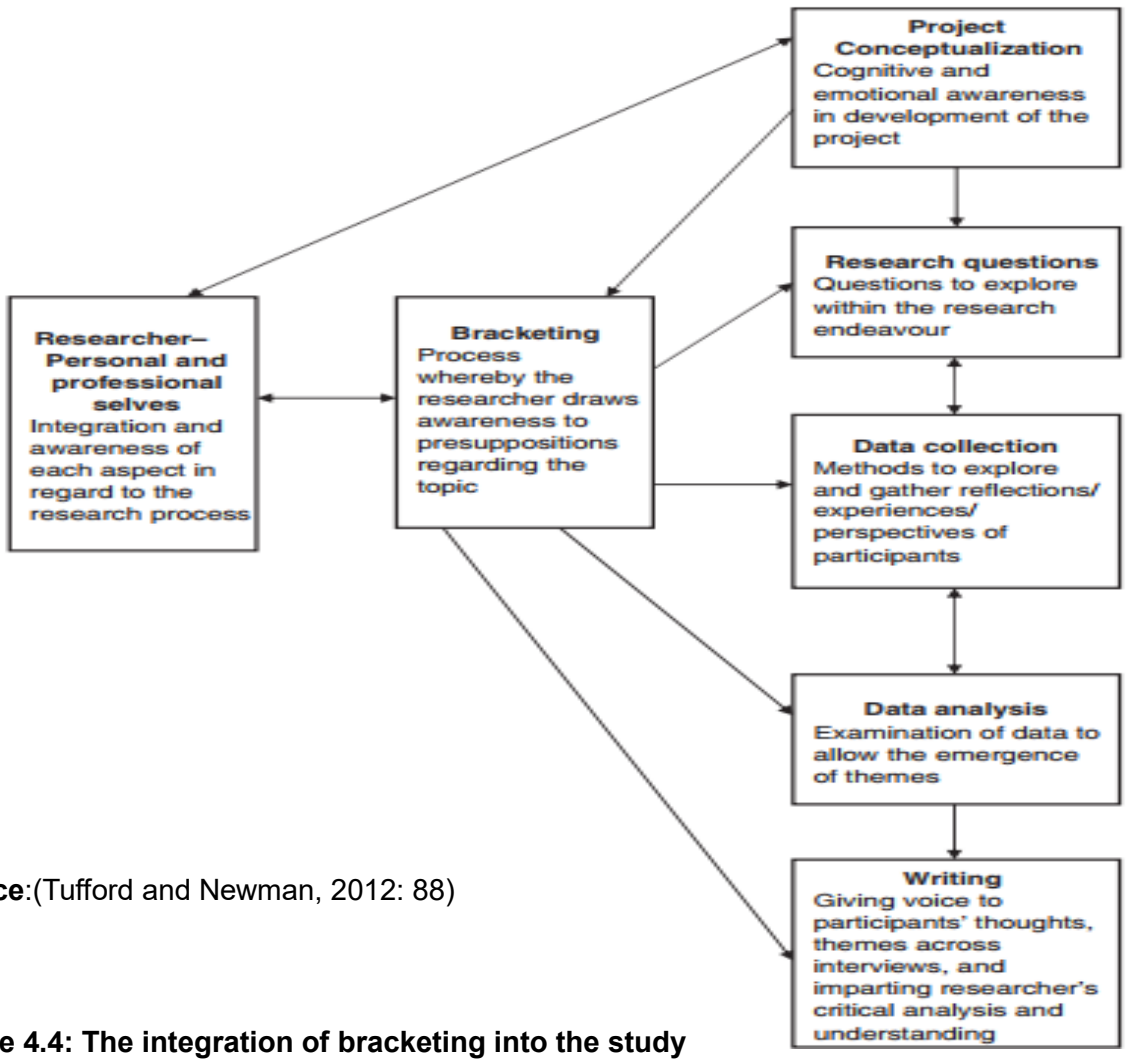
4.8 Validity and reliability

Validity refers to the ability of an instrument to measure what it is intended to measure (Colton and Covert, 2007: 65). Validity in research is classified as internal and external; the former relating to the extent to which the design and the data can draw accurate conclusions about cause and effect due to its logical consistency (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015: 103). External validity has more to do with the ability of the data to be generalised beyond the study's focus (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015: 105).

The researcher used literature about blended librarianship, and some elements in the theoretical framework to construct the research instruments (see Section 4.7). This process aided in defining the topic (its themes and content) and ensured that the research instruments measured the identified research questions.

4.8.1 Interpretive validity and bracketing

The researcher used interpretive validity to uncover the essences from the narratives of academic librarians. The researcher was interested in how well the respondents narrated their accounts and gave the meaning of events, objects, and or behaviours.



Source:(Tufford and Newman, 2012: 88)

Figure 4.4: The integration of bracketing into the study

To guard against inaccuracies at any stage of the study (Kumar, 2011: 164), the researcher applied validity using bracketing throughout the research process as a whole, that is: study design, research instruments, sampling strategy, data analysis procedures and conclusions drawn (see **Figure 4.4**).

Interpretive validity meant that the researcher 'bracketed' out his biases to allow interpretations to emerge from the academic librarians instead of the investigator (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012: 112). The researcher also relied on the research assistant to check the consistency of the instruments and the emerging results.

Creswell (2013: 84) warns that this researcher's background in academic libraries could shape the interpretation of the university librarians' experiences in a phenomenology. However, this researcher cast out his biases and preconceived knowledge of the problem to remain objective, to avoid the biases found in interpretivism. Patton (2015: 111) defines this action as "bracketing," where the researcher suspended his judgment to study the reality of everyday life.

To fulfil bracketing in the study, the researcher acknowledged that his prior knowledge of the socio-cultural environment in Zimbabwean academic libraries, and his conception of the theory-practice-divide in academic libraries is valuable. However, this prior knowledge of the phenomena could have got in the way when producing an accurate picture throughout the research process or to any of its steps: study design, research instruments, sampling strategy, data analysis procedures and conclusions drawn. The researcher made his assumptions explicit at the onset of the study and constantly identified and isolated his personal biases, opinions, feelings and intuition towards the research to preserve his neutral position.

4.8.2 Reliability

To increase the validity and reliability of the instruments, the researcher proof tested the semi-structured questionnaire at Solusi University (see Appendix 3), and then the corrected instruments were given to an MSc.LIS degree class at NUST. These two (2) sites had respondents who were like the study population. The researcher analysed the transcripts of the respondents, noting if there was consistency in answering the narrative accounts. The researcher found instances where there were misspellings, poorly worded text or confusing questions. The results obtained from the instruments were used to adopt

changes and then administered again to the data collection sites after taking note of these changes.

4.8.3 Credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012: 78) assert that in qualitative research internal and external validity and reliability are replaced with credibility, dependability and transferability.

4.8.3.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the extent to which participants' perceptions match up with the researcher's portrayal of them (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012: 144). To achieve credibility in the study the researcher triangulated the various perceptions of the problem. To clarify meaning, the researcher looked at narratives from the semi-structured questionnaire and interviews. Therefore, each research objective had more than one method to collect data to bring out a basic essence. Furthermore, the researcher inevitably added some assumptions into the interpretation of the narrative accounts with a view to drawing meaning to achieve trustworthiness. These assumptions were explicated in the narrative so that readers can make the same inferences. Jupp (2006: 258) calls this reporting reflexivity and circumscribes that it goes beyond credibility but also raises questions of ethics (has anyone been harmed by the research?) and questions of politics (whose side am I on, if any?).

4.8.3.1.1 Dependability

Dependability parallels reliability in quantitative research, although it is not assessed through statistical procedures (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012: 144). They also state that dependability refers to the extent to which one can track the processes and procedures used to collect and interpret the data. The researcher achieved dependability by checking the consistency of the instruments between different key informants so that biases for collecting and analysing the data are reduced. The researcher ensured that the instruments were able to code the same data as well as analyse the same data.

4.8.3.1.2 Transferability

Transferability or trustworthiness refers to the extent to which similar processes from the research will work in other settings and communities by understanding in depth how they occur at the research site (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012:144). Transferability was achieved by following the guidelines from Patton (2015: 684-685) to use information-rich narratives that elaborated both the present and transferable context of the phenomena. Thick, rich and detailed descriptions were provided for the experiences of academic librarians in their institutional work, to make interpretations of those experiences.

4.9 Analysis of the data

The study integrated both qualitative and quantitative data to increase the validity and reliability of the findings. Although the study was framed mainly through qualitative methods, quantitative data analysis was used as a form of triangulation to strengthen the qualitative findings, by presenting data in the form of graphs, charts and frequency tables. However, the quantitative data was not manipulated statistically because the study was mainly interested in descriptive statistics.

Phenomenological data analysis steps were taken by the researcher using the ideals of Creswell (2013: 83) that advocate for highlighting of “significant statements,” that provide an understanding of how academic librarians experienced blended librarianship. Similar significant statements were then clustered into central themes that Creswell (2013: 83) calls “meaning units”, then presented as “textural descriptions” or “general themes” (what academic librarians experienced which are presented using verbatim quotes, tables and graphs in Chapter 5).

Structural descriptions, that is, an analysis of the context or situation within which blended librarianship occurred (Creswell, 2013: 83), is presented in Chapter 6 by cross-examining the literature and theoretical framework vis-à-vis the textual descriptions.

Both the textual descriptions and the structural descriptions of blended librarianship were then synthesised together as an argument that shaped Chapter 7, where the essence (general summary or conclusions) of the study are presented. The process described here is called “horizontalisation” or “phenomenological reduction” (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015) and is presented in **Figure 4.5**.

Statement	Central theme	General theme	General structure	General summary
xxx [xxx xxx] xxx xxx xxx	1 2	CT.1 CT.3 Cen. CT.5 theme 1	xxx xxx xxx	xxx xxx xxxx
	3 4 5	CT.2 Cen. CT.4 theme 2	xxx xxx xxx	
	6	CT.6 Cen. theme 3		

Source: (Ratner, 2001:5)

Figure 4.5: Visualising the process of horizontalisation

The study made use of NVIVO 11® software to assist in the storage and analysis of the qualitative data collected in the study. NVIVO 11® is a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) with the capability of displaying the coding categories and coding schemes assigned by the researcher (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014: 46). The coding classes in the CAQDAS were used to review data as it emerged so that it captured new observations or interpretations made of the findings. NVIVO 11® can also present the data using graphs, charts, tables and text. The data contained in NVIVO 11® was used to seek similarities and differences from the participants which were used to construct a composite analysis.

Colton and Covert (2007: 39) consider the use of surveys as a quantitative approach because the closed questions used in the semi-structured questionnaire produce

quantitative data that could be manipulated through the frequency of responses for a category and comparing the responses to another variable, such as gender or age. In designing the responses to the checklists, the researcher of this study, used ordinal responses, where the academic librarians had to place values for pre-established statements into categories that were orderly ranked along a continuum, from low to high, that is low (0) and high (3) (**see Table 4.3**). These ordinal responses were limited to qualitative research and not quantitative research.

Table 4.3: Key for the ordinal values used in the study

None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time
0	**1**	**2**	**3**
Behaviour was not observed	Exhibiting some of the characteristics of the behaviour	Intermittent periods where the behaviour is practised	The behaviour is pervasive and becomes the primary task to the extent that attention to other tasks are compromised

In addition, the researcher used keywords in context (KWIC) to enumerate the number of times a theme came out of the responses. The assumption about the KWIC is that the higher the number of times a concept comes out of the responses, the greater the chances the concept has a relevance to a person or a community.

4.10 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues are more pronounced in qualitative research for two reasons (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2013). Firstly, qualitative research aims to collect data and information from the experiences of participants in the study so that the researcher can use this closeness to collect data. The researcher ensured that ethical issues were addressed so that no harm was caused to the participants. Secondly, the issues covered in this qualitative research may be sensitive to someone or an institution, and the researcher had to ensure that this information is kept confidential.

4.10.1 Clearance to conduct the study

Ethics clearance from the University of Cape Town (UCT), where this research Master's study is registered, was sought before conducting the study (see Appendix 1). With this clearance from the UCT, the researcher sought permission from the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education in Zimbabwe to conduct research in the selected universities for this study (see Appendix 2). Permission was also sought from the selected universities to collect data from the academic librarians and library boards (see Appendices 4-8).

4.10.2 Informed consent

The academic librarians were informed about the nature of the research in writing or in verbal form before any data collection. The purpose of the study was communicated to the respondents, the data required was stated and how the results of the study will be used. The researcher took caution from Kumar (2011) and Leedy and Ormrod (2015) that informed consent should allow participants to agree to participate in the study and give them the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Before the researcher wrote a preamble attached to each instrument were the purpose of the study was outlined and how the results would be used. It was assumed that academic librarians who filled in the questionnaire survey had engaged in implied consent, while the interviewees, were required to agree or disagree verbally to take part in the study.

4.10.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

The researcher protected the academic librarians' identities through anonymity and confidentiality. The participants received a statement (refere to the informed consent form in the appendix) that stipulated that their privacy and confidentiality will not be violated. Anonymity guaranteed that the academic librarians' responses cannot be easily identified to a specific respondent (Babbie, 2013: 35). The researcher gave code names (for example PHSBL60) to the academic librarians instead of using the real-life names. The researcher used a uniform coding system, whereby PHSBL, was a shortened version of the dissertation title: Phenomenological Study of Blended Librarianship, and the numeric value was assigned chronologically on each case entered. The researcher guaranteed

confidentiality to the respondents before conducting the narrative interview and asked them not to state their name or any other person (see Appendices 10 & 11). The researcher also assured the academic librarians that their responses will not be shared without their consent (see Appendices 9,10 & 11) because academic librarians are a closely-knit community where the possibility of knowing an individual's response is very high. Despite other libraries being mentioned by name in Section 4.6, one library was coded as PHSBL80 Library, and the academic librarians therein gave verbal consent to be interviewed

4.10.4 Reporting the findings of the study

The researcher will share the results of the study with the academic librarians, higher education institutions and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education through a research seminar, research papers and posters at conferences. The researcher reported the findings in a complete and honest way without misrepresenting or intentionally misleading the audience about the findings (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015).

4.11 Delimitations of the study

The study collected the narratives of academic librarians in BUSE, CUT, LSU, MSU, NUST and academic librarians from PHSBL80 university libraries. The research would have collected data from other state universities, however, the universities did not reply to the letter of request to gain entry to collect data.

Two pre-tests were conducted at Solusi University and NUST to test the instruments. NUST was selected because of proximity and at the time when the pre-test study was conducted there were students studying their Master's Degree in Library and Information Science (MSc. LIS). The MSc. LIS group came from diverse academic libraries across the country and thus offered invaluable perspectives about the instruments.

A semi-structured questionnaire was sent out to be filled out by academic librarians who included TAs, CLAs, LAs, SLs/TLs, SLAs and ALs, to measure their level of blended librarianship practised in each academic library. Interviews were targeted at Assistant

Librarians and Library Management, due to their roles in executing operational strategies in the library. While collecting data from and CUT, BUSE and MSU the Library Board members suggested that only the Assistant Librarians must take part in the interviews because they supported the Information Literacy Skills (ILS) course and the training for new technologies. Hence the researcher used snowball sampling which allowed the respondents to recruit other informants who have similar or more knowledge (Connaway and Powell, 2010: 118).

4.12 Limitations of the study

The researcher encountered the following challenges during the study, which might impact the transferability or the credibility of the findings. The researcher had solutions on how to overcome each limitation noted.

4.12.1 Recall biases

The researcher observed that there was information that was missing due to the natural inability of the human mind to contain information for extended periods of time. The researcher had to interview 2-4 people per institution to determine the authenticity of each narrative, and then compare the transcripts to verify if they are internally consistent. Furthermore, the researcher took accounts given by the respondents to be representative of the missing information.

4.12.2 Finding academic librarians who have experienced blended librarianship

The researcher had a challenge in finding academic librarians who fit into the definition of blended librarians, and who have experienced blended librarianship. While the researcher was conducting the survey, some academic librarians pinpointed their colleagues who had the characteristics of blended librarianship, then the researcher went on to interview the academic librarians who had experienced blended librarianship for more in-depth information. The interviewees also recommended other persons who they thought were knowledgeable or had experienced blended librarianship. This process took a great amount of the time and monetary resources of the researcher.

4.12.3 Bracketing out the researcher's presumptions

The researcher had to treat academic librarians who he knew at a personal or professional level as people who he had never seen nor interacted with. This was challenging as the researcher had to appear as if he was not too knowledgeable about blended librarianship, nor too ignorant about the duties of the academic librarians. The researcher had to suspend judgement on numerous occasions to let the experiences of the academic librarians come out naturally in the data collection and analysis.

4.13 Summary of the chapter

This chapter discussed and justified the research methodology that was used in this phenomenological study that explored how Zimbabwean academic librarians are transitioning to become blended librarians. The philosophy of interpretivism and the deductive approach to theory development framed the study. The researcher collected data from a calculated sample of 101 academic librarians from non-professional roles to Library Board level. Data was collected from NUST, LSU, BUSE, MSU, CUT and PHSBL80 Library which was anonymised.

The study was a multi-methods qualitative study which collected primary data from the ZULC guidelines (document research), semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. In turn, the multi-methods or triangulation of the data collection instruments was helpful in the reconciling of information gathered from two or more sources to strengthen the findings and enrich interpretations. Measures were taken to enhance reliability, validity (interpretive validity and bracketing) and credibility of the instruments were discussed.

The chapter also outlined the interpretive phenomenological data analysis process which relied on horizontalisation, that is, how key findings were grouped into themes and later into structural descriptions. Issues to do with ethical considerations were also discussed together with how the respondents were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality.

The chapter was concluded by observing the challenges that were experienced by the researcher in the study and the solutions that were encountered throughout the study.

The following chapter presents the findings of the study, using the methodology that was discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction and overview

The purpose of this exploratory phenomenological study was to investigate the phenomenon of the Zimbabwean academic librarian's professional identity which has been evolving into blended librarianship through institutional work. The researcher collected qualitative data through document research first, secondly a self-administered survey and then followed up with in-depth interviews targeted at key informants.

The participants in this study included 20 interviewees and 59 respondents to the questionnaire survey of academic librarians. The survey data from the questionnaire was first transcribed and sorted into Microsoft Excel before it was transferred for coding in NVIVO 11 Pro®. The interviews were transcribed from speech to text and formatted using NVIVO 11 Pro®. The document research, semi-structured interview and survey data were organised first by their corresponding research question and then grouped by categories and subcategories using a predetermined coding scheme and then the codes that emerged from the data. Therefore, this chapter presents the findings of the study through significant statements that indicated how academic librarians were experiencing blended librarianship. The findings are presented using narrative descriptions, matrix displays and network displays. The significant statements were then grouped into larger units of information that corresponded with the research questions which Creswell (2013: 83) has called "textual descriptions".

5.2. Demographic details of the study participants

After the pre-test study, the researcher began the data collection process by distributing the semi-structured questionnaire to academic librarians at various job positions to gauge the level of blended librarianship practised in each academic library. **Section A** of the questionnaire and the interview guide required the demographic information from the

participants**. Figure 5.1** reflects the positions of the survey questionnaire participants in the study.

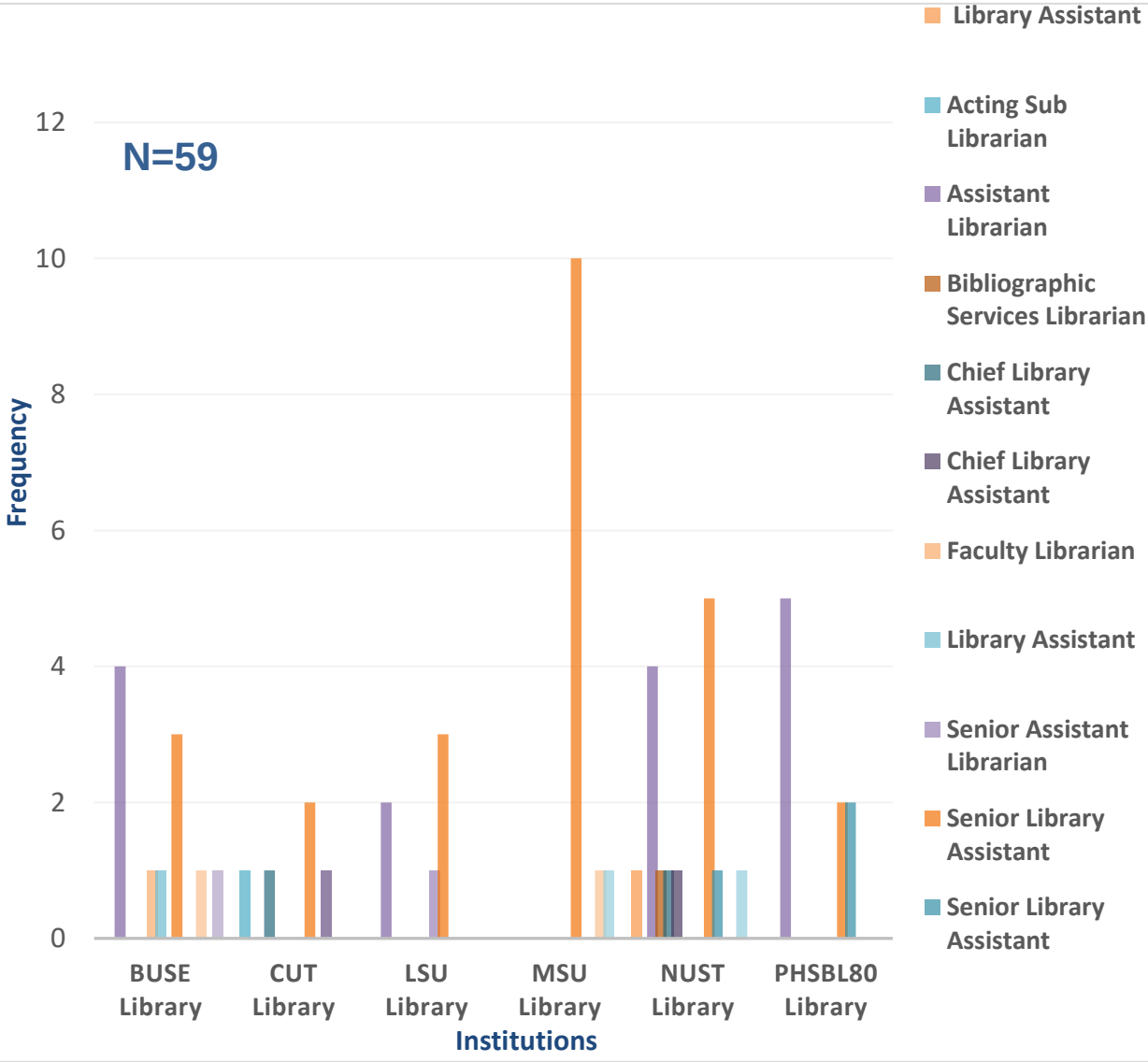


Figure 5.1: Job positions of the survey participants per institution

Eighty (80) questionnaires were sent out to selected academic libraries that agreed to take part in the study (see Section 4.6). Fifty-nine (59) questionnaires were returned; hence the **return rate** of the survey was **74%**. Since Figure 5.1 is useful for a visual

summary and because of its fullness, cannot accommodate numbers and percentages, Figure **5.2** summarises the participants by the institutions that took part in the survey.

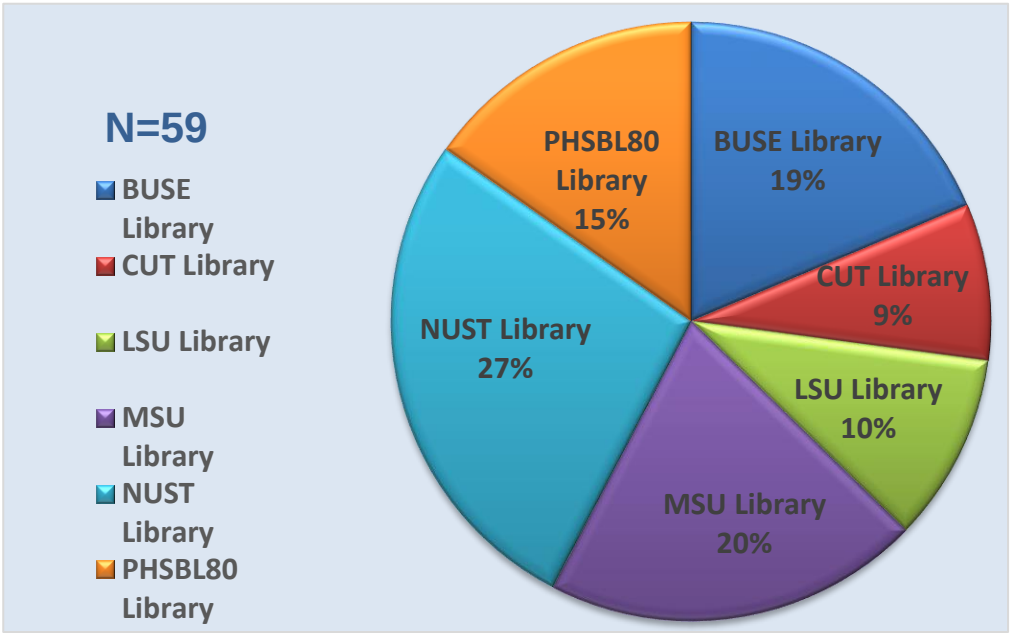


Figure 5.2: Survey respondents by institutions

Table 5.1 reports the frequencies of the age groups in the questionnaire survey. The 36-40 age group accounted for the highest number of respondents, while the 26-30 age group has the lowest frequency.

Table 5.1 Age groups of survey respondents

N=59

Age	Frequency	Percentages
26-30	6	10%
31-35	14	24%
36-40	18	31%
41-45	12	20%
45 and above	9	15%
Total	**59**	**100%**

The survey respondents were asked to indicate the number of years that they have been working in an academic library (see **Table 5.2**). From Table 5.2 the researcher determined that the survey participants were typical cases to the research problem since the majority had 6-10 years and 11-15 years in practise.

Table 5.2: Survey respondents' number of years in academic library practice

N=59

Years in practice	Frequency	Percentages
0-5 years	8	14%
6-10 years	20	34%
11-15 years	19	32%
16-20 years	4	7%
21-25 years	5	8%
26 years and above	3	5%
Total	**59**	**100%**

Table 5.3 shows the demographic composition of the academic librarians who participated in the interviews. The interviewees ranged from middle-level management to Library Board level

Table 5.3: Interviewees by institution and designation **N=20**

	NUST	LSU	MSU	CUT	BUSE	PHSBL80	Total
Assistant Librarians	1	3	4	2	4	3	**15**
Systems Librarians	2	-	-	-	-	-	**2**
Deputy Librarians	1	1	-	1	-	-	**3**
Total	**4**	**4**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**20**

5.3 The adoption of blended librarianship using teaching of ILS and Low-threshold Technology Applications

The first research question of the study sought to establish how Zimbabwean academic librarians have adopted blended librarianship (**Section B** of the research instruments). This research question explored how the new and emergent roles of instructional design and instructional technology are practised in the context of Zimbabwean academic libraries. The researcher relied on the narratives of academic librarians to construct the reality of work situations and how academic librarians are fitting into these roles within the context of the university culture as in Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP).

The researcher explored each of the concepts: instructional technologist and instructional designer separately so that the related tasks pertaining to each of them could be examined closely. The section also sought to interrogate the experiences of academic librarians towards systematic problem-solving procedures.

5.3.1 Instructional design roles and teaching ILS

The survey respondents were asked to rate the time that they had spent teaching ILS over the past 5 years to determine if they had adopted blended librarianship (see research question 1 in Section 1.7). **Figure 5.3** summarises the results of the time spent teaching ILS for easier comparison. Fifty-six (56) survey respondents answered this question, and three (3) did not.

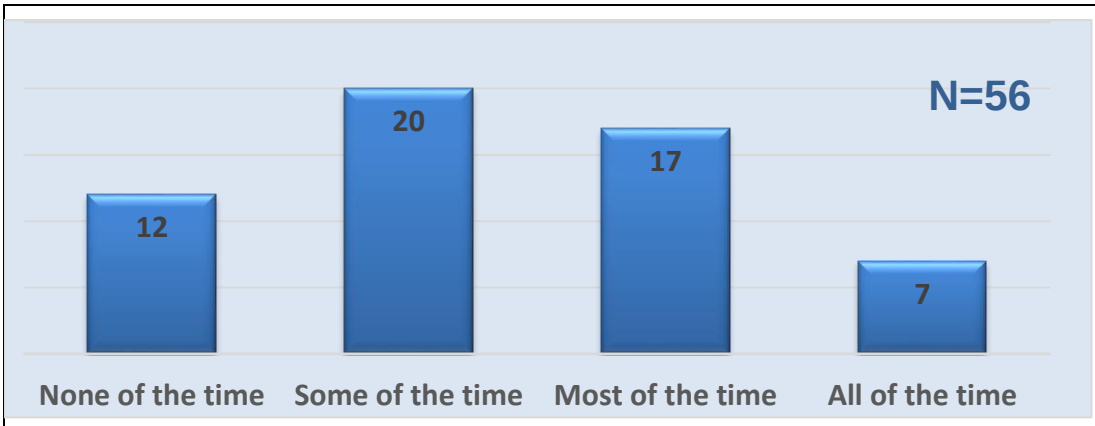


Figure 5.3: Rating of time spent teaching ILS over the past 5 years

A review into the demographic details of the respondents in the survey, found that the respondents who had indicated that they have not taken part in teaching ILS over the past 5 years were Senior Library Assistants (SLAs) from roles in the technical services departments of their libraries. There was also clear demarcation of professional and non-professional roles, especially among Assistant Librarians and Senior Library Assistants (see Section 4.7). A Senior Library Assistant responded in the survey that: *"I am not involved in ILS as it is done by Faculty Librarians*[1]*."* Some of these respondents had indicated informally that they they only worked at the Circulation Desk and did not do any ILS training.

The researcher also encountered another demarcation in the instructional design roles among academic librarians at MSU Library, where it was now a prerequisite for Assistant Librarians who taught the ILS course to have a Master of Science (MSc.) in LIS. This was a recent development at the time of collecting data.

Figure 5.4: Wordcloud frequency count of interview transcription

[1] The Faculty Librarian post is a synonym for Assistant Librarian in some of the Zimbabwean academic libraries.

A word frequency query was also applied to all the interviews (after creating a stop list for irrelevant words) to determine the kinds of words that academic librarians used during the interview (see **Figure 5.4**), and it was found that "teaching" was one of the words that received a high frequency count. A relevance check was made on "teaching" to see the contexts where it was used. The study found that most of the interviewees referred to teaching in the delivery of ILS, instruction in the use of eResources, and demonstrating Low-threshold Technology Applications (LTAs) to the lecturers and students. The research instruments had used information technologies to refer to LTAs, this was deliberate so that the respondents to the survey questionnaire and interview understood what the researcher was looking for. The researcher preferred to use LTAs so that the term could be related to the relevant literature in the successive chapters.

5.3.1.1 ILS training in academic libraries

From the interviews and the survey questionnaire, the researcher found that the Assistant Librarians were the key persons engaged in the teaching of ILS, while the Systems Librarians acted as support persons engaged in maintenance of the IT hardware and software infrastructure and training of the academic librarians. It was found that the Assistant Librarians' teaching roles fell into two distinct categories: formal and informal teaching. For example, ILS was taught as an examinable course usually under the Communication Skills, Information Technology course or was adapted to the needs of a faculty. In all instances where the ILS course was taught, it targeted at all first-year students. Some interviewees explained arrangements to teach ILS in their respective libraries, maintaining that the formal ILS course was taught as follows:

> ***PHSBL63:*** *"ILS is part of the Communication Skills Course. It will appear under Communication Skills because it is a two-part course, where we have Information Literacy and Communication Skills. This faculty is a bit different to others, here we have Communication Skills and ILS feeds into the (name of course withheld) course."*

> ***PHSBL73:*** *"MSU introduced a module called Introduction to Information Technology which is in two parts, it covers IT, as well as Information Literacy Skills. The library takes the other part which is Information Literacy Skills. This is an*

examinable module and I am one of the lecturers from the library side…"

While some interviewees stated that ILS was taught informally as follows:

> ***PHSBL64**: "As a faculty librarian I do conduct ILS training to students and staff. Although it's not a full-time course, which is formalised, I teach informally. We also conduct training workshops for academic staff members if new things have come up, for example a new database that we think is important for them. We do one-on-one trainings in their offices demonstrating how to use the specific databases…We do trainings with students, but this not formalised yet. So, all that we can do is to work with them when they are referred by their lecturer."*

Table 5.4: Blended librarianship in ILS training **N=53**

Frequency of ILS training	None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time	Totals
I plan and facilitate in-class activities for a subject using library resources	22	19	7	3	**51**
I am responsible for providing eResources for online classes/exercises conducted through Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai, etc.	35	13	2	2	**52**
I am responsible for online classes/exercises initiated by my library	32	11	2	6	**51**
I provide simulations and games for lecturers and learners to examine issues and problems that arise in a specific situation	45	5	1	1	**52**
I conduct one-shot instruction for new students/faculty members	15	17	12	9	**53**
I teach ILS as a course and I am responsible for grading learners	36	8	3	5	**52**
I can conduct face-to-face instruction at any time	7	18	17	10	**52**
I can do just-in-time teaching based on the immediate needs of students during a lesson or work period	17	18	9	6	**50**
I plan and facilitate in-class activities for a subject using library resources	22	19	7	3	**51**

ILS was also taught informally through one-on-one sessions with the students and lecturers. Academic libraries who taught the formal ILS course, also held informal sessions for students and lecturers to sharpen their community's information and technology skills or to introduce a new technology as part of user support.

As part of the first objective of the study, that sought to establish how Zimbabwean academic librarians have adopted blended librarianship, the survey respondents were asked to rate statements that pertain to ILS training. **Table 5.4** shows the results of the ratings on a Likert scale of *None of the time - All the time* (that is 0-3). 53 survey respondents answered this question and the remaining 6 left the question blank. **Table 5.4** shows that the statements that generated the highest frequencies of ILS training related activities conducted by academic librarians were found on the category *Some of the time*:

a) *I plan and facilitate in-class activities for a subject using library resources;*
b) *I am responsible for providing eResources for online classes/exercises conducted through Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai, etc. am responsible for online classes/exercises initiated by my library;*
c) *I can do just-in-time teaching based on the immediate needs of students during a lesson or work period;*
d) *I can conduct face-to-face instruction at any time;* and,
e) *I conduct one-shot instruction for new students/faculty members".*

Although the ZULC guidelines stated that academic libraries should have a formal ILS course, not all academic libraries are teaching the ILS course. For example, academic librarians from NUST and LSU libraries reported through the interviews that they have attempted to formalise ILS but have encountered bottlenecks. Their Vice Chancellors[1] and Senate Committees, which govern each of them respectively, have shot down the proposals to teach the ILS course, despite evidence that the trial programs conducted were successful. NUST and LSU libraries are currently teaching ILS through informal sessions. An Assistant Librarian from LSU Library gave the following account of how ILS

[1] The Vice Chancellor is an administrative post in the university, with the equivalent of a Chief Executive Officer or Chancellor in British and North American universities. The President of Zimbabwe subsumes the Chancellery roles as stated in the constitution, while Vice Chancellors deputise and oversee the running of the university.

was taught informally:

> ***PHSBL61:*** *"The community is responsive to the use of these things (ILS and technology) … what really suffices is the drawback that we don't really teach…As much as it comes out as informal for their schoolwork, we teach as and when we get free slots, negotiating with the lecturers...It's a win-win situation, it's not something that's formally embedded..."*

Academic libraries which taught the formal ILS course, also held informal sessions for students and lecturers to sharpen IT skills or to introduce a new technology as part of user support services. For example, an Assistant Librarian from MSU Library said the following:

> ***PHSBL73:*** *"In our module it (teaching LTAs) is not included but the library trains them in the use of Mendeley, we start with the lecturers and then move on to the Masters' students then go down to the other students."*

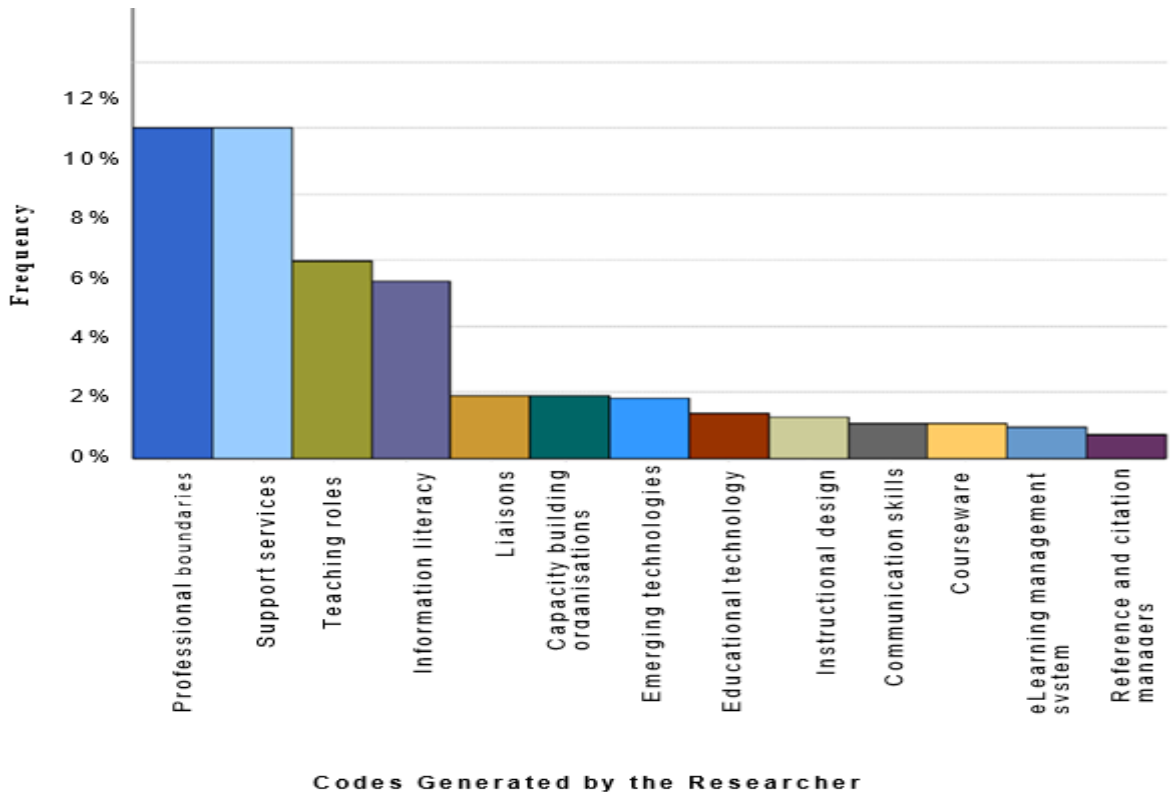


Figure 5.5: ZULC guidelines sorted through scores from coding

A content analysis was done on the ZULC Academic Library Guidelines based on the codes that were generated from coding the interviews and the survey. It was found that Teaching Roles and Information Literacy scored highly in the codes, taking third and fourth place, respectively (see **Figure 5.5**).

5.3.2 Instructional technologist roles

The survey respondents were required to rate the amount of time they have spent over the past 5 years teaching ICTs and LTAs in their communities to ascertain if they had adopted blended librarianship (see research question 1 in Section 1.7).

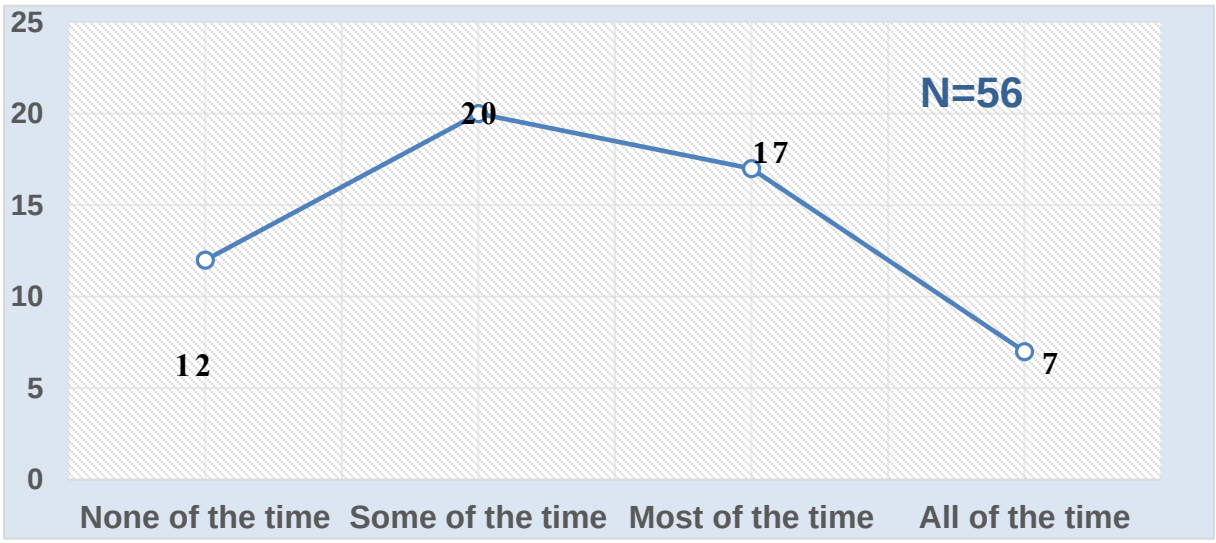


Figure 5.6: Time spent teaching ICTs and technologies

Figure 5.6 shows that ICTs are not taught often by a high number of the survey respondents as *Some of the time* received the highest frequency score (36%), followed by *Most of the time* (30%), *None of the time* (21%) and then *All the time* (13%). Only 3 survey respondents did not answer this question. Therefore, these results were explained by interrogating the demographics of the respondents, where it was found that most of the respondents who rated their time spent teaching ICTs and technologies as *Some of the time*, and *None of the time* are in CLAs, LAs and SLAs.

The low number of survey respondents (13%) who taught ICTs and technologies *All the time* could be attributed to other responsibilities they had in the library and the proficiency of the academic librarian. It was therefore important to cross-examine these factors further, by considering typical tasks that relate to the teaching of ICTs and technologies in an academic library.

In the survey, respondents had to complete a checklist of statements that reflected instructional technologist roles that were generated from reading the literature (see **Section D** in Appendix 9). The checklist was rated using the predetermined ordinal scores, and a frequency was made for each statement (see **Table 5.5**).

Table 5.5: Survey respondents' frequency of instructional technologist roles N=55

Frequency of ILS training	None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time	Totals
I plan and facilitate the integration of library resources, for example eResources and databases onto the course management system (Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai, etc.)	38	11	2	2	**53**
I am responsible for integrating third party commercial information services for example statistical agencies, indexing and abstracting agencies and so forth	37	8	4	3	**52**
I am responsible for customising the e-learning environment for storing personally preferred resources (for example, downloaded materials and hyperlinks)	30	12	7	3	**52**
I provide virtual reference services through email, instant chat or real time	15	23	10	6	**54**
I am responsible for the provision of training modules needed for effective information service and use	31	7	10	5	**53**
Consolidating learning-based print and electronic resources into the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	19	17	14	5	**55**
I demonstrate technologies through face-to-face instructions at any time	10	17	20	7	**54**

I identify and analyse emerging technologies and innovations that can be used by my community	20	15	11	8	**54**
I work with faculty to match the appropriate technologies for teaching, learning and research activities	23	14	11	5	**53**

It was found that most of the statements relating to the instructional technologist's roles were not practised by most of the survey participants who selected *None of the time*. Only two (2) statements scored relatively lower on *None of the time*: *"I provide virtual reference services through email, instant chat or real time"* with twenty-three (23) and *"I demonstrate technologies through face-to-face instructions at any time*" with seventeen (17). A further scrutiny found that *"I demonstrate technologies through face-to-face instructions at any time*" received a high count of twenty (20) for *Most of the time*.

The statements that reflect the survey participant's least practised (having a high score on *None of the time*) instructional technologist roles were:

a) *I plan and facilitate the integration of library resources, for example eResources and databases onto the course management system (Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai, etc.);*
b) *I am responsible for integrating third party commercial information services for example statistical agencies, indexing and abstracting agencies and so forth;*
c) *I am responsible for customising the e-learning environment for storing personally preferred resources (for example, downloaded materials and hyperlinks); and,*
d) *I am responsible for the provision of training modules needed for effective information service and use.*

Most of the survey respondents who selected *None of the time* indicated that they had not taken part in teaching ILS and ICTs/LTAs and it was also found that very few survey respondents had taken part in these activities *All the time*.

Figure 5.7: Common instructional technologist roles

The researcher also found that the most common instructional technologist roles among the interviewees (made up of Assistant Librarians) centred around basic IT support, information retrieval for eResources, teaching LTAs (for example, use of plagiarism detectors, like *Turnitin* and reference management software like *EndNote*, *Mendeley* and *Zotero* among others and developing subject guides (see **Figure 5.7**).

Two academic librarians (from NUST and CUT Libraries respectively) made these comments about the staff at their library:

PHSBL70

"I do not think we teach technologies. We just teach students on how to access the information...I'm not sure if they are teaching hardware and software. They tend to concentrate more on access to eResources. I suppose those who practise may have another picture, these are my observations."

> ***PHSBL67:*** *"All what I can say… we don't teach hardware and software because we have an IT department that teaches that. But you find when you are teaching ILS to first years, some of them will not be familiar with how to use a computer. So maybe it will be good if they are taught the ILS after they have grasped basic IT competencies."*

However, one Systems Librarian from the NUST Library (one of the aspiring blended librarianship institutions) decried the low usage of subject guides, highlighting that academic librarians did not liaise with their communities:

> ***PHSBL75***: *"7 years ago, we introduced SubjectsPlus a software that can be used to build subject guides…A lot of work was done, and lobbying was done. But ultimately it was observed that the use of the guides and their creation has not grown to the level of our expectations. One reason may be that there has been that lack of liaison with the academics. When you are building subject guides, you must talk with academics to see what sources they want included in those guides such that their students can benefit…In that way I would expect them to be very relevant to the students."*

Additionally, the least common instructional technologist tasks among the interviewees, was the active involvement in the eLMS and teaching or demonstration of new technologies (see Table 5.5). It was not surprising to find that only PHSBL80 Library made use of the eLMS (transcending blended librarian, see Section 5.4). Another reason why the instructional technologist role is not common among academic librarians, regardless of the library is due to the different levels of competencies among participants. One interviewee narrated the following account:

> ***PHSBL66:*** *"I am not proficient in Mendeley. That is because only two people in our library were sent for the Mendeley train the trainers workshop and amongst those two persons, I was not one of the selected candidates."*

This respondent shows that the lack of financial resources may lead academic libraries to selectively train their staff. This issue is explored in more depth in Section 5.6.2, where instructional technology competencies are discussed.

5.3.2.1 Assessments on the use of technologies in communities

The interviewees were asked to narrate the assessments that they conduct prior to teaching any technologies. This question explored, if the academic librarians were introducing technologies that are needed by their community. It was found that there were libraries which conducted regular formal assessments of their students' needs (for example, PHSBL80 and MSU Libraries), and those which conducted formal assessments at irregular times (for example and BUSE, CUT and LSU Libraries), and then NUST Library which had not conducted any formal assessments, and relied mostly on informal assessments. PHSBL80 Library conducted formal assessments of technologies on a regular basis, as part of a university wide effort with other departments. These surveys were done annually and were targeted at the students.

In all the universities, it was found that the lecturers' needs were brought in through the various committees such as those that consider teaching and learning. One respondent from PHSBL80 Library gave the following account about the scenario:

> ***PHSBL72:*** *"… at times we do conduct surveys to gather how our users feel about the library. We also have a midterm survey which is campus-wide and is conducted by the Quality Assurance Department. It is from that survey that we gather some of the information on our users' expectations. Normally we identify what they need and then we plan to adapt our training to whatever they need. We also work with some units, for example, the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) for lecturers. They identify the needs of the lecturers and forward them to the library and we teach the lecturers based on what the TLC would have recommended."*

The researcher established that all the academic libraries had a committee that works on issues related to teaching, learning and research. Academic librarians in were involved in the committees one way or the other. It was up to the library to select who to send as a representative, in most cases, the academic librarians reported that the deputy librarians (Library Board members) attended the meetings.

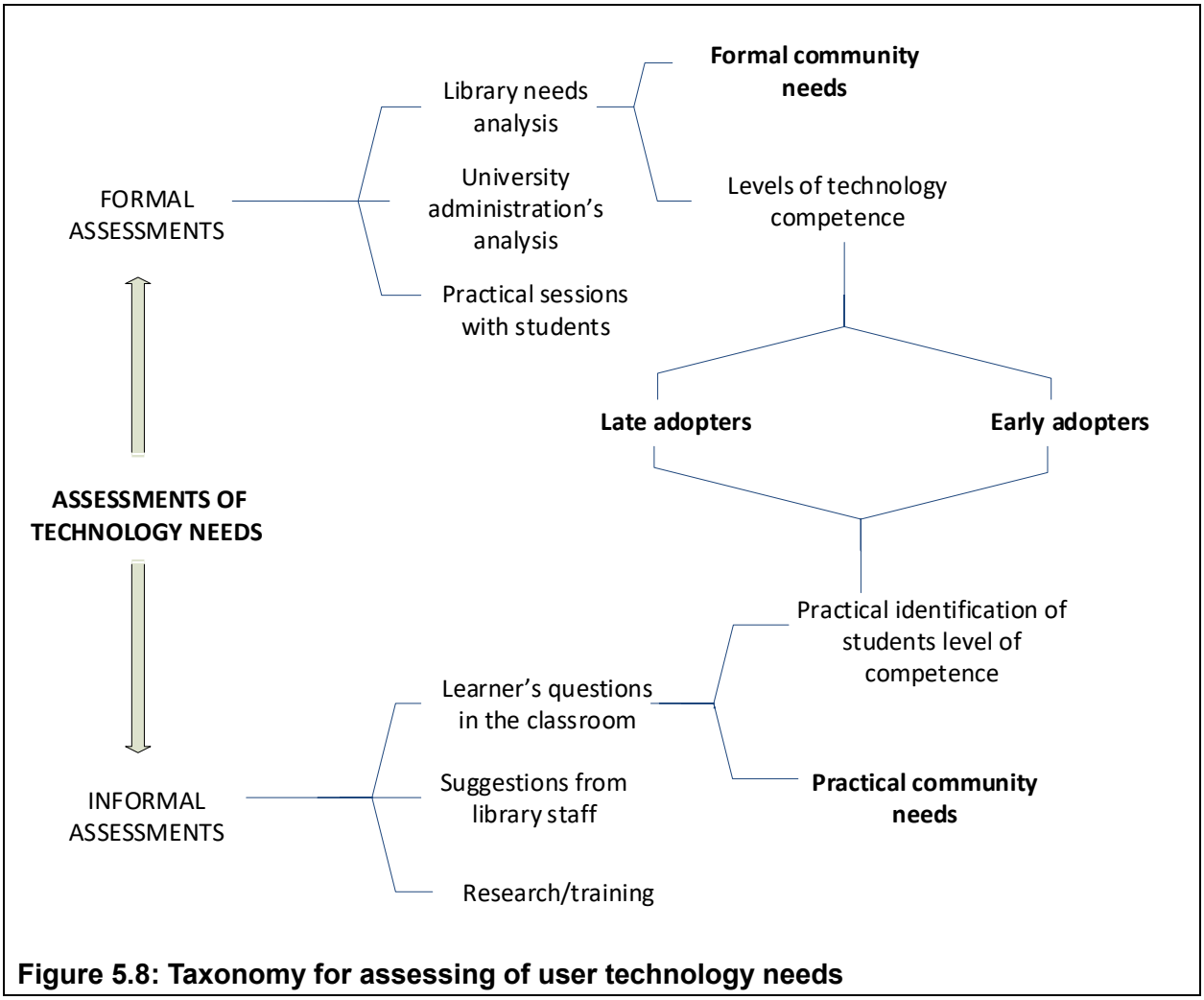


Figure 5.8: Taxonomy for assessing of user technology needs

It was also found in the interviews and survey data that the libraries which conducted formal assessments, also conducted informal assessments through interacting with students, suggestions from other library staff and personal research (see **Figure 5.8** which the researcher drew to visualise the interviewees' statements for both formal and informal assessment processes, taking note that the outcomes are similar).

All the interviews and survey respondents narrowed their observations of their user community's use of technology into two categories: late adopters and early adopters. The interviewees perceived the young (who were referred to as the digital natives), the urban, "conventional" (regular semester students) and resourcefully privileged students to fall under the category of early adopters. In contrast the late adopters were perceived as the

older lecturers, rural students, block students (distance learners who learn a regular programme in a shortened semester) and the resourcefully disadvantaged.

5.3.3 Liaisons centred on blended librarianship

The survey respondents were required to rate statements that were poised at faculty-liaison activities, so that the study could establish the extent to which the respondents were engaged in faculty liaison when adopting blended librarianship (see research question 1 in Section 1.7.

Table 5.6: Frequency counts for liaisons in Zimbabwean academic libraries N=56

Frequency of blended librarianship activities	None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time	Totals
Developing, building, and maintaining good public relations inside and outside the library	5	9	26	15	**55**
Negotiating for copyright/licenses, collecting, and storing relevant course materials into accessible platforms, for example subject guides or course outlines	5	9	26	15	**55**
Answering subject related reference questions	5	9	26	15	**55**
Anticipating what learners and lecturers want from the library	5	9	27	15	**56**
Delivering services in a way that responds to users' needs in a timely and personalised way and with continuity	5	9	27	15	**56**
Maintaining a presence in and among the targeted user group	5	9	25	15	**54**
Learning, understanding, operating, and providing a service within the space of the user	5	9	26	15	**55**
Collaborating with other units/functions to serve learners/lecturers	5	9	27	15	**56**
Developing, building, and maintaining good public relations inside and outside the library	5	9	26	15	**55**

Academic librarians in the study were engaged in different types of liaisons in their universities. These liaisons cut across the professional and para-professional roles, because the libraries have user driven services. **Table 5.6** shows the frequency counts for statements that are in line with liaisons conducted by academic librarians.

Table 5.6 shows that three (3) statements in the survey had a frequency of twenty-seven (27) under *Most of the time* category, and the statements are:

a) *Anticipating what learners and lecturers want from the library;*
b) *Delivering services in a way that responds to users' needs in a timely and personalised way and with continuity; and,*
c) *Collaborating with other units/functions to serve learners/lecturers.*

In fact, the *Most of the time* category enjoyed relatively high frequency counts for all of the statements (see Table 5.6). This shows that the academic librarians are responsive to their community needs, whether it is the lecturing staff or students. The survey respondents observed that they anticipated the needs because of their regular contact with the community. Most importantly, functions in the selected libraries worked together through collaborative or ad-hoc teams to meet the community needs. Although most libraries had a demarcation in departments over roles and functions, the survey data suggested library staff could cut across departments to attend to a query from the community or simply refer the query to the relevant department.

The statement that received a score that was just one or two points was: *"Maintaining a presence in and among the targeted user group"*. This could probably be attributed to the fact that very few academic librarians were in their faculties.

From the interviews the researcher surmised that only four (4) academic libraries (CUT, PHSBL80, NUST and MSU libraries) had branch libraries within faculties. The rest of the academic librarians at LSU and BUSE operated at their main libraries and did not visit their respective branches daily. They did not have regular contact with their communities because of the duties that they had to fulfil at the main library branch. In addition, the Assistant Librarians reported that they did not have subject specialisms for the faculties

that they were serving, thereby making it more difficult for academic librarians to maintain a constant presence within the targeted user group.

It was also found in the interviews that not all Assistant Librarians had a presence in the social media groups of their faculties. Those who were in the social media groups, reached out to the students and faculty through micro-blogging sites such as Facebook, social groups through WhatsApp, surveys through Google Forms and other chat facilities embedded onto the library websites and the help-desk. The survey respondents reported that their libraries relied on the Assistant Librarian as the liaison person who would make regular contact with the lecturers and students, hence CLAs, LAs and SLAs in this arrangement may not often have first-hand contact with the community.

5.3.3.1 Partners whom the library liaises with

Liaisons were also taken as collaborations and are necessary for the adoption of blended librarianship (research question 1 in Section 1.7), therefore in the interviews the researcher asked the academic librarians whether collaborations were necessary.

Most of the interviewees (14), perceived the faculty members as the key persons to have collaborations with, arguing that faculty were responsible for the teaching, learning and research activities, hence if academic librarians collaborated more with them, the library would be more responsive to the community needs. There was a positive response among the academic librarians on who they should collaborate with, as all the interviewees agreed that collaborations were necessary. There were mixed responses on who were the key persons and institutions that academic librarians should collaborate with (see **Figure 5.9**).

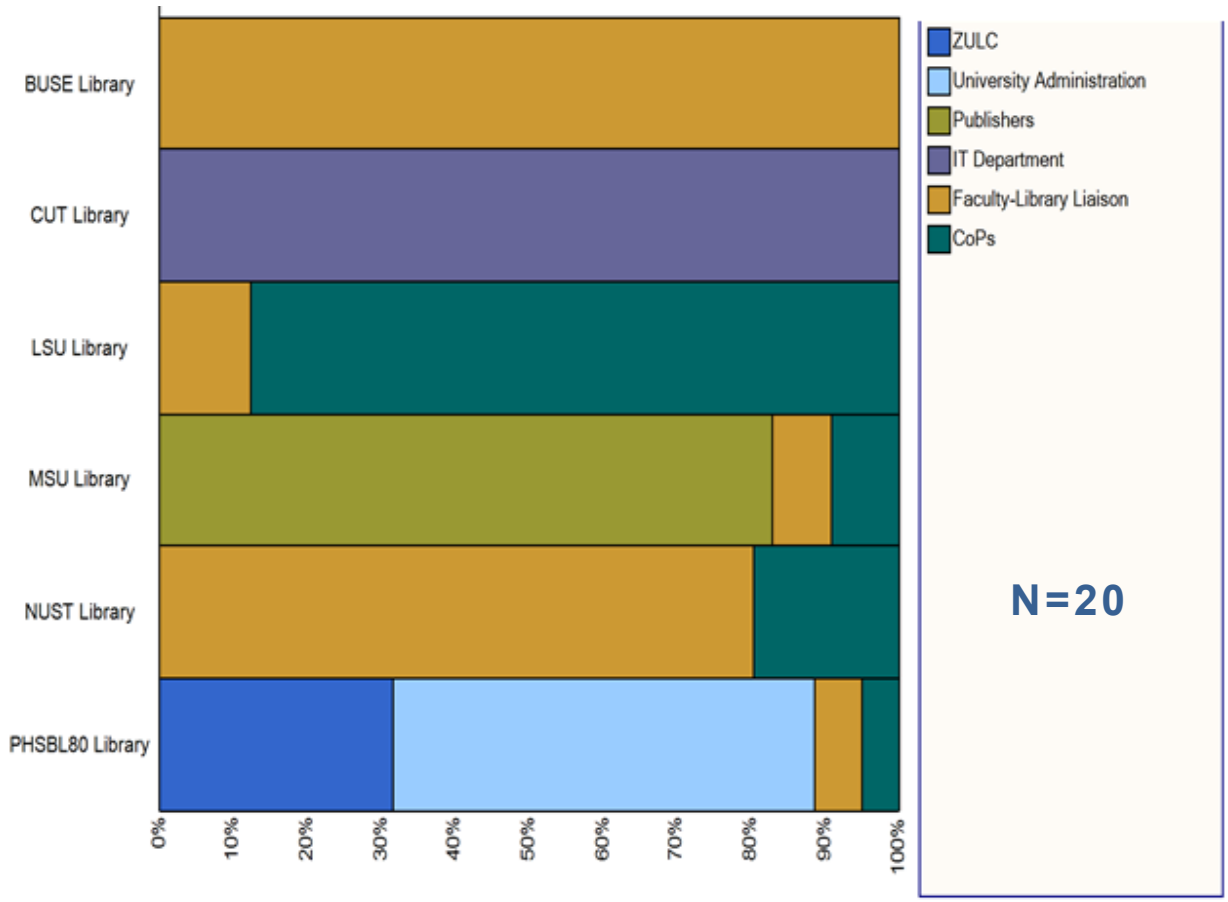


Figure 5.9: Interviewees' reported liaisons

The lecturers in the faculty were also perceived by this group as being very influential to the students since they had a first-hand contact. An interviewee from CUT Library said the following:

> ***PHSBL65:*** *"The first port of call is the faculty, you don't have to leave out the faculty because at the end of the day, the grading that they (students) are going to get...they are going to get grading from the faculty and grading from here in Information Literacy. We will be working with the faculty, so I think the faculty is the main collaborator that we can work with for everything to be effective."*

The rest of the interviewees reasoned that academic librarians should collaborate with the executive bodies that run their universities, CoPs (other academic librarians from various institutions in Zimbabwe) and ZULC. The interviewee who cited that collaborations should be made with the executive bodies like the Senate, admitted that faculty staff were important, nevertheless the "*value students attach to the library, can be determined by the perceptions of the administration staff".* Herein, this interviewee raised the notion that the decisions that are made by the executive bodies like the Senate influence the way students think about the academic library. If the executive body has a negative attitude for instance, this negative attitude trickles down to the students, through their lecturers.

An interviewee from LSU Library who saw CoPs as the best collaborating partners, purported that academic librarians with similar teaching, learning and research interests could work together and share ideas and challenges. This interviewee also felt that the CoPs could move issues to the ZULC executive which could alert the university executive, through the Vice Chancellors' meetings. The commentary that the interviewee brought in to support this suggestion, was: *"I think then it would have an impact than doing it the other way around where it feels like we are imposing to our communities"*. This interviewee recognised that even if academic librarians unite together, they would need a body that takes their collective thoughts to the university executives, hence the recommendation of going through ZULC.

Another interviewee from LSU Library saw ZULC as the most important stakeholder that academic libraries can partner with. This interviewee gave examples how the executive committee of ZULC has led change in academic libraries in Zimbabwe, for example, the introduction of the LIS course in most academic libraries. This interviewee gave the following account:

> ***PHSBL66:*** *"Academics in universities can be pushed by ZULC, but it would be difficult if one academic library tries to push academics at their university. I think we can still make collaborations with faculties. Even when such collaborations exist, we still need a voice like ZULC to enforce some of the issues that affect its members. If ZULC does not put pressure on the academics to have buy in, it becomes difficult for us mere librarians…"*

The survey and interview respondents who saw publishers as important for liaisons stated that it would enhance the teaching and learning in the classroom.

It was found that blended librarianship needs vital stakeholders who are engaged in the process, and it is up to the academic librarian or the academic library to see which stakeholders are most important depending on the situation at hand. The respondents in the survey and the interview have seen faculty, the University executive, CoPs, ZULC and publisher as the key stakeholders.

The prominence of ZULC from the survey respondents and interviewees prompted the researcher to bring in the document research from the ZULC guidelines. If was found that the ZULC guidelines had set standards on how academic librarians can practise in their communities. The Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016) guidelines covered these headings which are in line with blended librarianship:

a) *Staffing and Continuous Professional Development;*
b) *Management/Administration/Planning;*
c) *Collection Development;*
d) *Cataloguing and Classification;*
e) *Information Services; and,*
f) *Information Literacy/E-Learning.*

The responses from the academic librarians in the survey and the interviews were in tandem with the ZULC guidelines and touched mostly on the sections on Staffing and Continuous Professional Development, Management/Administration/Planning and Information Literacy/E-Learning.

5.3.4 Systematic problem-solving approaches

It was found that most of the respondents in the survey were not familiar with all the steps that are found in the ADDIE model; this is seen in the high numbers of *"No"* responses in **Table 5.7**.

Table 5.7: Systematic problem-solving approaches

N = 45

Process	Description	Yes	No
Analysis	Defining what is to be learnt	**13**	**32**
Design	Specifying how it is to be learnt	**13**	**31**
Development	Authoring and producing learning materials	**13**	**32**
Implementation	Installing the instruction product in a real-world context	**13**	**32**
Evaluation	Determining the impact of the instruction	**13**	**32**

In the written responses about systematic problem-solving procedures (which are part of the first research question that sought to find out how academic librarians have adopted blended librarianship), eight (8) survey respondents mentioned systematic problem-solving steps which they used which were like the ADDIE model. One survey respondent wrote the subsequent statement: "*I identify the problem, then I select the required tools to solve the problem, solving the problem. I am redoing the process if the problem is not solved, then evaluation*". This is an indicator that there are some academic libraries, though few, who are following systematic problem-solving procedures in the teaching, learning and research. An exemplar was one survey respondent who revealed that he/she used the ADDIE model regularly. One of the academic librarians who said that it was **possible to implement systematic problem-solving procedures** gave the following comment:

> ***PHSBL62:*** *"In most cases we identify the training need from a problem point of view where maybe one person or a couple of people will come and present a certain problem and then we try to look at what training solution can address that problem. At times we are proactive from our own end, where we think that at this stage our community should be knowing ABC, then we conduct the training based on the feedback from the people that we have trained first. We can then decide to continue or to modify our training accordingly."*

Five (5) of the interviewees, declared that they were not sure if they had followed systematic procedures before, hinting that systematic problem-solving procedures might not be commonly practised in their institutions. One of these interviewees **was not sure if the library followed systematic problem-solving procedures**, and said, *"No, not in our context. Maybe, it's been done, and I haven't realised it. Nothing that I can really say…"* and another mentioned that: *"I am not responsible for that",* perhaps indicating either disinterest with systematic problem-solving steps, or implying detachment with the steps or the whole teaching, learning and research process.

However, the responses also indicated that there is a possibility that systematic problem-solving procedures are practised unknowingly by some academic librarians. This was seen where one interviewee explicitly stated that he had **followed the steps in the ADDIE model unconsciously**, subsequently raising the possibility that some of the ADDIE steps could be followed, but not necessarily in the chronological order from the model. In reaction to the question of systematic problem-solving procedures, this interviewee held the following view:

> ***PHSBL66:*** *"I have seen literature on that...what is it called? the ADDIE model? I read about that... I have conducted the steps in ADDIE, but I don't think I have followed them in their order, as I have been doing it unconsciously knowing...I think I have done systematic problem solving before…It is possible to follow systematic problem-solving procedures, because it is something that is likely done unconsciously..."*

The group that felt that it was **impossible to effectively implement systematic problem-solving procedures** in the teaching, learning and research process, raised issues pertaining to the socio-cultural environment that could prohibit systematic problem-solving procedures from being implemented. A response from an Assistant Librarian at MSU Library, which has the largest number of enrolled students was:

> ***PHSBL79:*** *"…it may be possible…when you consider our numbers, especially if you are at the Information Desk, where you attend to a lot of requests, you can hardly be systematic. It may be a long process, which may inconvenience other students. We try to cut it short to give another students attention... So, we try to cut the sessions short because our numbers are quite big."*

Table 5.8: Attitudes towards systematic problem-solving approaches

Attitude towards systematic problem solving	Reasons from respondents
Not sure if systematic problem solving is conducted in the library	• No evidence of ADDIE in the workplace
Confident that ADDIE can be applied in the library	• Citing problem solving procedures like ADDIE
Unconsciously following systematic problem-solving steps	• Appreciation of the steps in the ADDIE model, and presenting similar traits, which may not follow the order • It's just a random thing. In most cases it is the client who brings the problem, then we try to solve that problem. • I have conducted the steps in ADDIE, but I don't think I have followed them in their order, as I have been doing it unconsciously knowing.
It is not possible to implement systematic problem solving	• Citing problems inherent in the socio-cultural environment

Table 5.8 summarises the responses that the interviewees gave towards the application of systematic problem-solving procedures, into four (4) categories. The justifications given for each of the categories have been created using the verbatim textual narrations from the interviewees presented here in this section.

5.4 Categories reflecting the adoption of blended librarianship in the selected universities

After presenting the general themes of Section 5.3, the researcher deduced that the academic libraries were not at the same level in terms of their adoption of blended librarianship (see research question 1 in Section 1.7). The researcher clustered the data into four different levels of blended librarianship (that the researcher came up with to

highlight the intricate nature of each academic library) which were established by the researcher from the data presented in from Section 5.3.

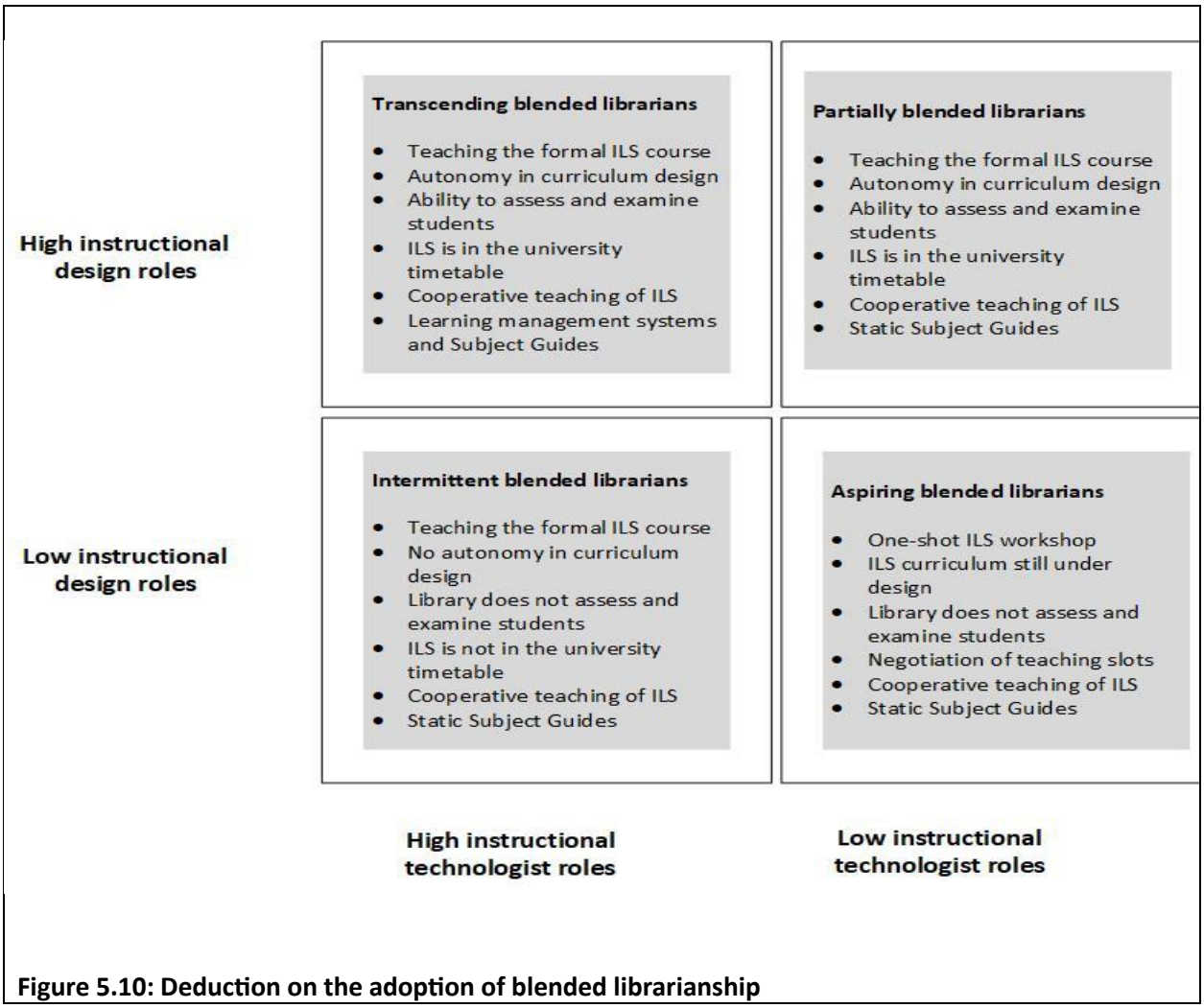


Figure 5.10: Deduction on the adoption of blended librarianship

In constructing the two-by-two matrix, the researcher used the examples from Fisher et al. (2007: 129-130) and Mckinney and Wheeler (2015). The categories in Figure 5.10 are fluid (because each academic library seems to have its set of challenges, and because some characteristics overlap into other categories). However, these categories helped the researcher to understand how blended librarianship has been experienced in different contexts. The researcher deduced from the data that there are institutions which are "**transcending blended librarians"**, "**partially blended librarians"**, "**intermittent blended librarians"** and "**aspiring blended librarians"**, where each category has been

developed through the institution's academic librarians' level of instructional technology and instructional design roles. **Figure 5.10** is a two-by-two matrix table with different categories supported by verbatim quotes from the interviews and the survey in Section 5.3.

The discussions bellow (Section 5.4.1-5.4.4) were used to support the researcher's deductions and build on the work of blended librarianship (Bell and Shank, 2004, 2007, 2011; Shank, 2006; Campbell, 2014).

5.4.1 Transcending blended librarians

These academic librarians taught the ILS course, and are responsible for developing the ILS course's modules, assignments and examination questions and marking the examinations (high instructional design roles). There was a faculty (see interviewee in PHSBL65 in Section 5.3.1.1), within this category, where ILS was embedded within an academic course, but in most cases, ILS was taught as a module under Communication Skills. Academic librarians who taught ILS mentioned that it was part of the university timetable, yet they faced challenges in acquiring space for teaching and lecturers who would encroach into their teaching slots. One Assistant Librarian from PHSBL80 Library gave the following account about the university timetables and teaching space:

> ***PHSBL63:*** *"We have some faculties where it (ILS) is not put on the master timetable and we must find slots. We must reason with students when they are free. It's very discouraging in faculties like these…The other issue is in terms of enrolment. Our numbers are swelling up and the training facilities are not enough to serve the students. For example, we have space for 50 students (in the library), and at times we may find that there are 100 students waiting to be taught ILS and we have an hour per week. So, if the class is split into two groups, we get 30 minutes each. 30 minutes delivering an ILS session is not enough, even if we were to look at the OPAC without going into issues of referencing and citation, accessing electronic resources and so on. This is discouraging because the management is looking at this as our baby but it's the University's..."*

Moreover, the academic librarians who were transcending blended librarians, not only relied on static subject guides, but also used eLMS (high instructional technology roles), either developed by the library or specific to their faculties (see Section 5.3.2). Therefore,

PHSBL80 Library was perceived by the researcher as an ideal example for transcending blended librarians.

5.4.2 Partially blended librarians

These academic librarians shared the same features as transcending blended librarians (high instructional design roles in curriculum design, teaching, assessing and examining learners) but differed in that partially blended librarians did not use eLMS for their delivery of ILS (low instructional technologist roles), preferring the static subject guides. MSU Library was perceived by the researcher as an ideal case for partially blended librarians.

5.4.3 Intermittent blended librarians

These academic librarians taught the ILS course but were not responsible for developing the ILS course's modules, assignments and examination questions as well as marking the examinations. ILS was taught as a module under the Communication Skills or Information Technology Department. The ILS course was not yet part of the university time-table, hence academic librarians would also compete with lecturers for teaching space and slots on the timetable. One Assistant Librarian from BUSE Library gave the following account to illustrate how academic librarians are treated in the classroom by the lecturers:

> ***PHSBL78:*** *"… I know of a colleague who had gone for ILS… then during the class, a lecturer interrupted the class so that he could give the students a test. If a lecturer had the audacity to do that …we will certainly lose the respect from the students who might equate our roles to those of babysitters.*
>
> *Also, some lecturers want librarians to go to their classes because they are going to be presenting papers at conferences. So, at the end we are babysitters.*
>
> *… when it is work, lecturers should treat it as work not to call us because they want to go and present papers. When everything is going on all right and in order, they do not want to see us in their classes. They are not taking us seriously. In other words, they are implying that someone must be there so that when the VC comes to the class, it appears as if students are being attended to and they won't make an issue."*

Similarly, a Library Board member from CUT Library gave the following account:

> ***PHSBL69:*** *"… I know that librarians by their very nature are para-academics, so because of this, they were not deeply into ILS but as time goes I could see that this is not clearly defined on their job description. That is the reason why it is very difficult to convince the Senate or the executive that librarians want to get into the class."*

It was also found that intermittent blended librarians had no eLMS and had static subject guides. BUSE and CUT libraries were perceived by the researcher as ideal cases for intermittent blended librarians.

5.4.4 Aspiring blended librarians

These academic librarians did not teach the ILS course. They were still in the elementary stages of ILS course modules and seeking approval from their Senate Committees to teach the ILS course under the Communication Skills or Information Technology Department (low instructional design) (see Section 5.3.1.1). They relied on one-shot instruction workshops to teach ILS, where they would have in-class activities such as pointing or searching for specific information. The students would voluntarily attend the ILS teaching, and a timetable could be created based on students' free time slots or lecturer's request for the library to teach. Aspiring blended librarians had no eLMS and had static subject guides (low instructional technologist skills). LSU and NUST libraries were perceived by the researcher as ideal examples of aspiring blended librarians.

5.5 Academic librarians' identity as teachers and faculty status

The second research question (see Section 1.7) sought to explore the interpretive repertoires used by Zimbabwean academic librarians to define their blended roles (Section C in the survey and interview guide – see Appendices 9 and 10). The researcher had to delve into the attitudes and perceptions regarding blended librarianship and investigate the participants' experiences of blended librarianship.

5.5.1 Academic librarians' self-perceptions of blended librarianship

The academic librarians in the interview were asked to provide their self-perceptions regarding blended librarianship to explore if they regarded themselves as blended librarians (see research question 2 in Section 1.7).

Table 5.9: Key statements on blended librarianship identity

Aspects of blended librarianship	Key statements from interviewees
Combining traditional and contemporary issues in librarianship	***PHSBL73:*** *"Yes, because I combine the traditional role of a librarian with the training role of teaching, facilitating teachings and learning. Mixing the two makes me a blended librarian."*
Offering faculty liaisons	***PHSBL70:*** *"I think to some extent there are. The fact that we are doing faculty liaison, I believe that is part of blended librarianship."*
Teaching roles	***PHSBL77:*** *"Yes, I think so, in the sense that we also partake in the teaching of students in the faculties we service."*
Ability to use technology	***PHSBL65:*** *"I learnt quite a lot in technology. All these things I did outside the LIS curriculum because I know that these are the skills that are needed in a modern library."*

Table 5.9 summarises some of the key statements that selected academic librarians made about their self-perceptions as blended librarians.

Sixteen (16) out of twenty (20) interviewees saw themselves as blended librarians stating different aspects of blended librarianship as justifications, for example **combining traditional and contemporary issues in librarianship** (9 responses), **offering faculty liaisons** (2 responses), **teaching roles** (3 responses) and the **ability to use technology in the teaching, learning and research process** (2 responses).

Three (3) out of the twenty (20) interviewees were sceptical whether they qualified to be put under the label of blended librarians. Among these three (3), two (2) were Assistant

Librarians and one was a Systems Librarian. Another Assistant Librarian was sceptical to be called a blended librarian because there was no technology librarian at his university:

> ***PHSBL63:*** *"…I think we will be fully fledged blended librarians, but as long as we are like this- learning on our own...of course we have managed to redesign spaces, put in some new things, did collaborations, but we could do it a greater speed if we have someone who is an emerging technology librarian."*

The Systems Librarian argued that he could not be classified as a blended librarian because, he did not take part in most of the traditional librarianship activities in an academic library, such as shelving, cataloguing, and the circulation desk. This respondent made the following submission:

> ***PHSBL75****: "It is very difficult because we are service department... our core business would have included Reader Services and Technical Services…We come in as technologists. Of course, I do have a MSc in LIS…It would be more difficult for me to say I am a blended librarian. Maybe I am, but my day to day activities are not."*

From the results of the survey reflected in **Figure 5.11,** it can be seen that most of the respondents in the survey see themselves in terms of Mckinney and Wheeler's (2015) categorisation of academic librarians' perception of their teaching roles as a "Librarian who teaches". The least common category among the six (6) libraries is "Teacher-Librarian" and is present in only two institutions (LSU and NUST Libraries), reflecting a very small area in Figure 5.11, compared to other categories.

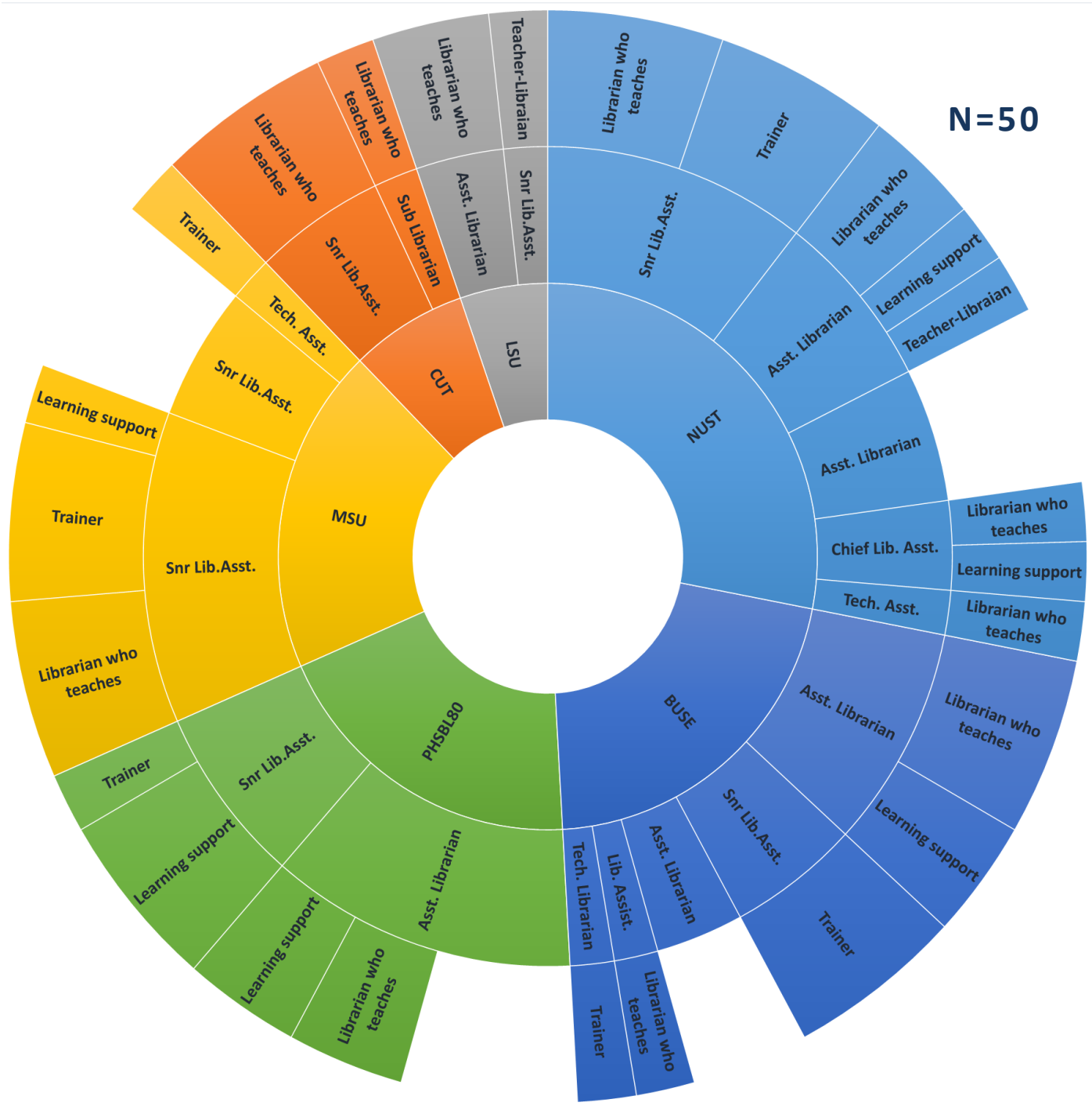


Figure 5.11: Survey respondents' self-perceptions in blended librarianship

5.5.1.1 Academic librarians' self-rated performance

Both the survey respondents and interviewees were asked to rate their performance as blended librarians so that the study can establish how they felt they were performing as blended librarians. Self-rated performances are important because they rely on respondents' evaluation of their work performance, and are a snapshot picture of the organisational culture in academic libraries and the university at large.

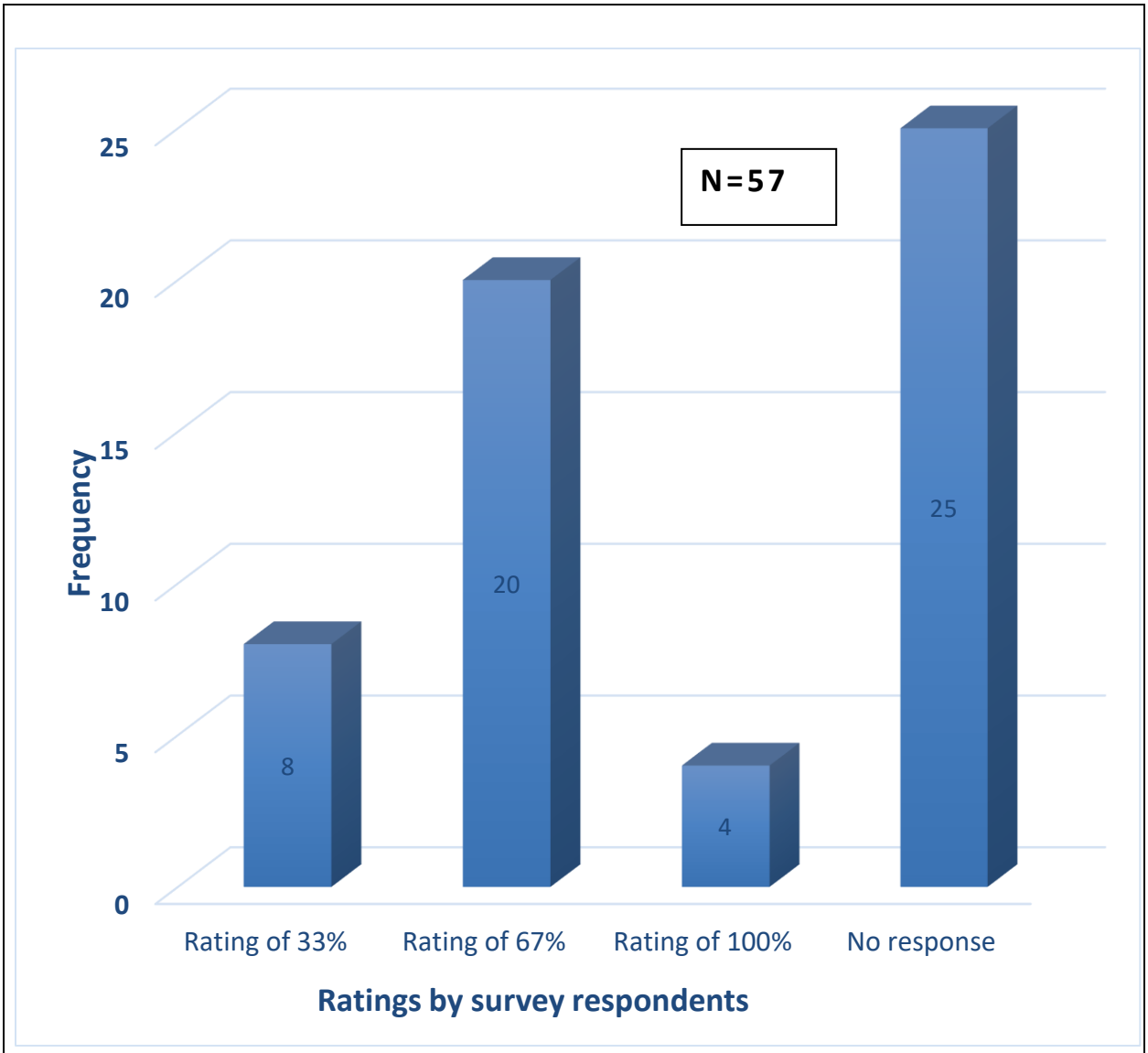


Figure 5.12: Survey respondents' self-rated performance

The survey respondents had to rate themselves on a scale of 1-3, as reflected in Section C of the questionnaire survey. Figure 5.12 shows the scores from 34 survey respondents who answered the self-rated performance question. Twenty-five (25) academic librarians did not respond to this item. Twenty (20) out of the 34 librarians who responded to this item rated their work performance at 67%, 8 rated their work performance at 33% and 4 at 100%.

The survey respondents who rated 67 % specified that their communities were satisfied with their services but stated that there was room for improvement. One of the respondents in the 67% category wrote: *"I am still coping with technological developments since technology is not static."*

The survey respondents who rated themselves 33% justified this by saying they did not have the necessary resources and skills to perform their roles. Some of the respondents who self-rated their performance 33% wrote that: "*More training is required to achieve more"*, *"I could be better if I get all the necessary resources," and "There is an absence of chances to perform, that affects my performance*."

Furthermore, the survey respondents who rated themselves 100% justified that their communities were satisfied with their work, and that they had the requisite skills for blended librarianship. One of these respondents stated that: *"I am a qualified librarian. I have kept abreast with current trends in the profession through online Google groups, workshops and Communities of Practice."*

The interviewees were also asked to rate their performance as well on a scale of 1-5, where 1 was the lowest and 5 was the highest, and thereafter they were asked to justify the response.

Table 5.10 summarises key responses from interviews about the ratings blended librarianship.

Table 5.10 Rating and justifications for blended librarianship

	RATINGS	KEY STATEMENTS FOR JUSTIFYING RATING
Assistant Librarians	**40%**	*"The systems part is still a grey area"* *"Better background in the subject area"; and,* *"The way in which the technology is changing"*
	70%	*"I lack some skills in Systems Development"; and,* *"There are duties that I may not be able to do now"*
	80%	*"I'm judging by the response that I get";* *"There is still room for development";* *"On the lecturing side I can learn more"; and,* *"I am trying to give back to the community especially were techn concerned"*
	90%	*"There is still a lot that I need to learn"; and,* *"Librarianship is dynamic"*
Systems Librarians	**80%**	*"What we have tried to do is based on the theories"*
Library Board Members	**60%**	*"We are still doing the very basic"*
	80%	*"They are not to be stuck in traditional librarianship"*
	100%	*"They are working hard to change negative perception in the unive*

The four (4) Assistant librarians who rated had a basic knowledge of the subject areas of their faculties, could not keep up with the rapid changes in technology and did not have

skills in systems librarianship and development. Similarly, two (2) interviewees who rated themselves 70% said that they lacked skills in systems development and that there were other duties which they were not capable of doing. The interviewee who spoke more about systems development also made the following comment *"This (systems development) is something that I am going to take for my additional studies. It seems systems librarianship is a critical component in blended librarianship."*

Three (3) Assistant Librarians who rated themselves at **80 %** gave reasons that it was based on the response given by their community and a need for more improvement, especially in teaching skills, while one of them gave the response based on the role academic librarians played in teaching technologies in the university community.

Only two (2) interviewees rated themselves 90% and gave reasons that there was room to learn more competencies, as librarianship is dynamic. Only one Systems Librarian, responded to the question, and rated 80%arguing that the technologies were taught were in theory, and were yet to be implemented.

The Library Board members were asked to rate the performance of their library staff members in terms of blended librarianship to verify the responses that were given by the Assistant Librarians. Library Board members at NUST Library rated the Assistant Librarians' performance 70% stating that they were still practising basic elements of blended librarianship, since the ILS course had not been introduced. Library Board members at CUT Library rated the performance of academic librarians80%and iterated that they practised both traditional and contemporary aspects in librarianship. Library Board members at LSU Library held that the library staff there, could be rated 100% because they were using their work roles to change the negative stereotypes about librarians in their university.

5.5.2 Perceptions of academic librarians in the university

The academic librarians were asked to present their community's perception of the role they played to establish the interpretive repertoires in research question 2 (see Section 1.7). **Table 5.11** summarises the academic librarian's perceptions of their role in the

university community from the interviews.

Table 5.11: Academic librarians' perceptions of their role in the community

Type of perceptions	Category of academic librarians' perceptions		
	Negative perception	**Mixed perception**	**Positive perception**
Perceptions of students	They follow negative stereotypes from lecturers They do not value the librarian's knowledge	N/A	The ILS course has changed student perceptions
Perceptions of lecturers	They are negative about the academic librarian's knowledge Do not value academic librarian's qualifications Do not support academic librarian's programmes	Their value of the library depends on where they were trained It depends if the library is imparting skills already in the community It depends on the level of interaction with the community	Respect academic librarians because they are now aware of library services There is a high commendation of academic librarians which has reached the executive

In the interviews, academic librarians had **mixed feelings** about lecturers' perceptions. One interviewee felt that lecturers, who had gained their professional qualifications outside Zimbabwe, attached a higher value to the library, unlike the lecturers who had studied in local institutions.

Other interviewees claimed they were now receiving **positive perception** from their communities due to their leading roles in the use of ICTS within the university (for example referencing and citation tools and anti-plagiarism software), the emergence of librarians with higher qualifications such as MSc. LIS, academic librarians who were crossing the academic and non-academic divide through the ILS course and, the consistent marketing of library products and services.

5.5.3 Academic librarians' perceptions of faculty status

Both the survey respondents and the interviewees were asked about their perceptions towards faculty status to get to the essence of the second research question (see Section 1.7). The survey respondents were asked whether recognition through faculty status would lead to more effectiveness in their teaching, learning and research processes. Out of the 55 survey respondents who answered this question, ninety-four percent (94%) of the survey respondents, gave a positive response of "Yes" indicating that they agree that faculty status would lead to effectiveness in their teaching, learning and research. Only 6% of the survey respondents disagreed that faculty status would lead to effectiveness in their teaching, learning and research.

The interviewees were also asked whether faculty status would improve their participation in the teaching, learning and research processes. Eleven (11) academic librarians interviewed agreed that faculty status would improve their delivery of services to their communities, while seven (7) interviewees disagreed that faculty status would improve their effectiveness. The remaining three (3) did not answer the question. Furthermore, both the interviewees and survey respondents who agreed that faculty status would improve their service delivery, stated reasons that were aligned to:

a) *Stimulation of confidence among academic librarians to take additional duties in the university;*
b) *Recognition of the ILS course in the university time-table, thereby encouraging students take the ILS course "seriously";*
c) *Monetary benefits, for example, Assistant Librarians in some libraries were paid for teaching ILS;*
d) *Support from university administration in the provision of the provision of rights and resources that can be allocated to librarians;*
e) *Recognition of academic librarian's knowledge and research skills; and,*
f) *A change of negative stereotypes about academic librarians.*

One of the survey respondents who disagreed that academic librarians should have faculty status, simply stated that *"…we are not full-time lecturers…"*, implying that academic librarians cannot have faculty status. The interviewees who disagreed that

faculty status was necessary to improve the effectiveness of academic librarians, had justifications which were grouped as:

a) *Reliance on each individual librarian's expertise in teaching, learning and research as a driver for recognition;*
b) *The need to change lecturers and student's negative stereotypes towards academic librarians;*
c) *Aligning the library with a relevant department so that the academic library can share resources;*
d) *Fear of forsaking traditional librarianship roles; and,*
e) *Fear of causing tensions with lecturers. Academic librarians fear that lecturers "think we are taking away their jobs".*

5.5.3.1 Academic librarians' perceptions of library service models

The researcher also sought to find out how academic librarians viewed both concepts of subject librarianship and blended librarianship to answer the second research question (see Section 1.7). Ninety-one percent (91%) of the survey respondents agreed that subject librarianship is a most effective mode for delivering teaching, learning and research needs of the university community. Nine percent (9%) of the survey respondents disagreed.

The interviewees were asked to support or refute the motion that subject librarianship may lead to effective blended librarianship roles. The responses where categorised as *Agree*, *Mixed feelings* and *Disagree* and then sorted into generative statements that reflect the intention of the response, for example, better service delivery, applying subject knowledge into blended librarianship thereby improving faculty collaborations and providing information to specialist information groups (see **Table 5.12**).

Table 5.12: Effectiveness of subject expertise in blended librarianship

	Attitudes		
	Agree	**Mixed feelings**	**Disagree**
Better service delivery	Know the exact information that students and faculty need	Academic librarians can work across the subjects as generalists	It is up to the community to make use of the information provided Difficulty to obtain a relevant qualification in a subject area
Applying subject knowledge in blended librarianship	Subject knowledge can build subject guides and improve faculty liaisons with faculty	N/A	N/A
Providing information to specialist information groups	There are associations and special information groups aligned to faculties who are provided with information	N/A	N/A

The survey responses and the interview responses were collated, and it was found that 41 academic librarians spoke about **the value of subject librarianship**, citing that knowledge of the subject area was important to serve their communities. When academic librarians were familiar with a subject they could “tailor make” the trainings to include the subject’s databases, citation styles and relevant examples within the subject. However, only one academic librarian who served a faculty that included the LIS department had requisite qualifications that allowed the academic librarian to work effectively in the community. Academic librarians who believed that subject librarianship could lead to better service delivery, revealed that they would know the exact information that students needed, and would not rely on giving out general information. One Assistant Librarian mentioned that he worked with special interest groups that were aligned to the faculty, and as such, considered subject knowledge a bridge between the library services and special interest groups.

Five (5) academic librarians (in the interview) had **mixed reactions about subject librarianship**, noting that academic librarians could work across the board, and did not need to be subject experts, but work closely with faculty to ensure their needs are met.

Two (2) interviewees who **disagreed that subject librarianship was necessary** to achieve blended roles, informed the researcher that it was not possible to specialise in one subject in their communities because of the difficulty in obtaining a relevant qualification in a subject area outside LIS. Other reasons that the academic librarians gave for failing to implement subject specialism were staff rotations and career changes. However, another group of academic librarians had a counter statement that implied that general subject knowledge could deliver relevant information, and it is up to the student or faculty member to *"advance their skills on their own."*

The two (2) academic librarians whose responses fell under the labels of intertwining blended librarianship with subject librarianship, believed that the two are related and play a complementary role. One of these academic librarians said *that "being a blended librarian cuts across all facets of librarianship, whether subject librarian or non-subject librarian*."

5.5.3.1.1 Academic librarian's perceptions of library service models

To pinpoint other library services models which could improve teaching, learning and research, the interviewees were asked to suggest their own models, which they have encountered through reading the literature or through an experience. Eight (8) academic librarians said that they did not know of any other service models. Four (4) interviewees suggested that blended librarianship is effective and should be introduced in almost all academic libraries, while two (2) academics were satisfied with subject librarianship.

However, two (2) Assistant Librarians were cautious about the full adoption of blended librarianship, taking note that academic libraries need to understand blended librarianship and then customise it to suit the context of their library. The two (2) Assistant Librarians who had had made these precautious statements said the following:

PHSBL66: *"…blended librarianship is an effective model, but it is yet to be tested within the Zimbabwean context. Some of the things that we read in the literature might not be applicable to Zimbabwe, but there might be some issues that we can take and some aspects here and there that can fit into the model."*

PHSBL70: *"I understand where you are coming from, but my view is that we are a developing country. We are struggling right now to pay the salaries for the staff that we have. I think as we go along, there may be room for that kind of model to work… I think in the developing countries it's not possible, it means employing more people and right now, we cannot afford it. That is why we are still using the basic model where we have one person looking after several departments which are different..."*

Library Board members from CUT Library suggested that an alternative approach is to introduce the model of roving librarians, who would work away from their offices in the spaces that students are in, for example, the hostels, around campus and classes. A Library Board member from LSU Library also suggested that academic libraries should have personalised librarians who specialise in their community's personal interests, like a personal banker would. However, the LSU Library Board members also observed that the economic challenges in the country made it difficult for the personal librarian model to be effective. Lastly, another academic librarian spoke of embedded librarianship, arguing that blended librarianship was more focused within the library. This academic librarian argues that embedded librarianship goes a step further, were librarians would be working with their respective faculties rather than the main library. Additionally, the Systems Librarians advocated for libraries to use eLMS to deliver services such as ILS tutorials to increase the interaction between the library and the students.

5.6 The key competencies among the academic librarians in the study

The third objective sought to establish the competencies that facilitate blended librarianship in Zimbabwean academic librarians (Section D of the research instruments – see appendices 9, 10 and 11). The competencies were divided into instructional design and instructional technologist competencies, thereafter, the methods used to gain these competencies were cross-examined.

5.6.1 Instructional design competencies

The respondents in the survey were requested to rate their instructional design competencies using the latest edition of the IBSTPI standards mentioned in Section 3.4. Eleven (11) of the IBSTPI standards were used in the study as they had a relevancy to the overall research question. The results of the survey respondents' rating of the IBSTPI are presented below on **Figure 5.13**.

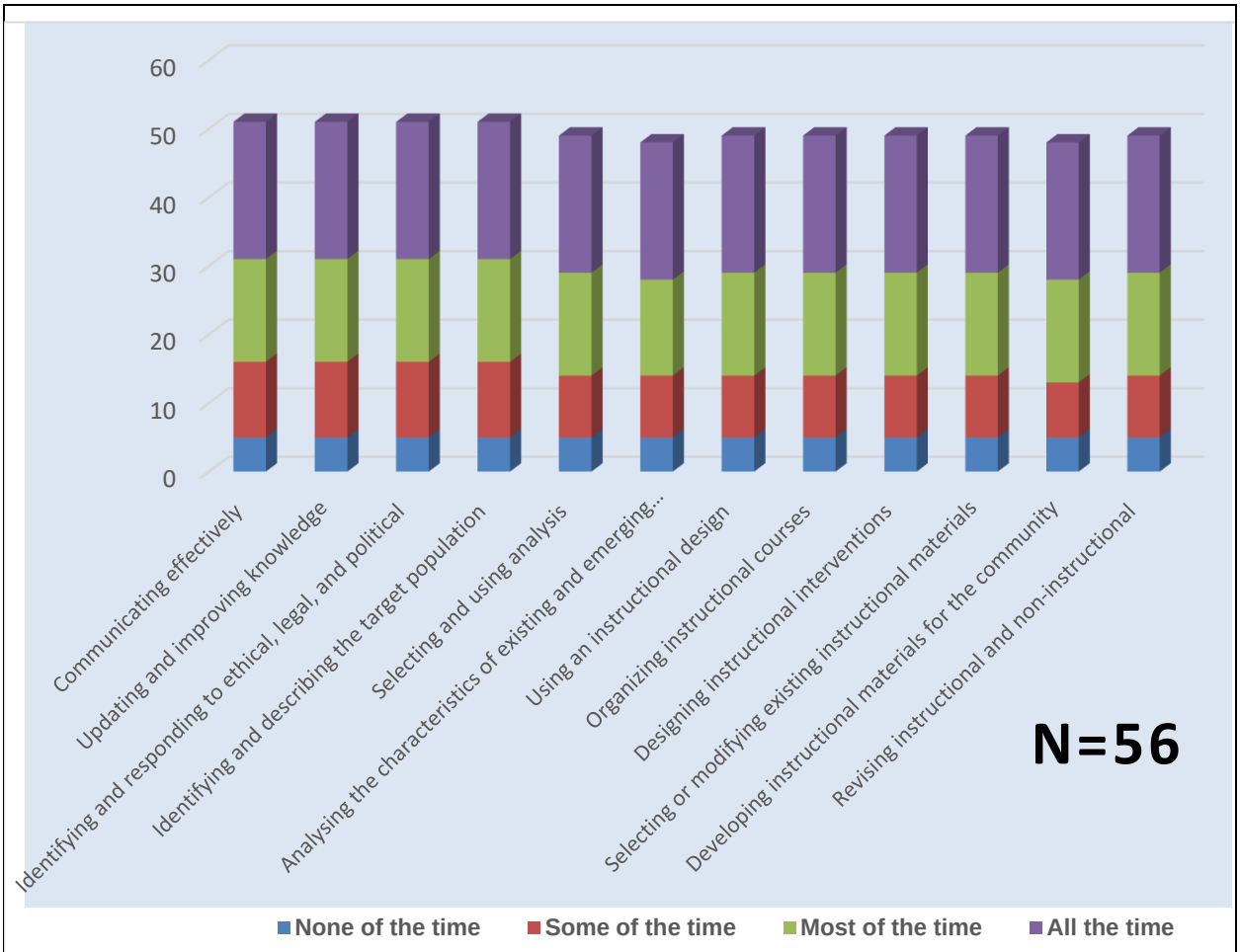


Figure 5.13: Survey respondents' use of the IBSTPI competencies

All the IBSTPI competence statements were scored 20 for *All the time* and at 5 for *None of the time*, by survey respondents. Variations in rating occurred for the categories *Most*

of the time and *Some of the time.* The statement *"Analysing the characteristics of existing and emerging technologies and their potential use for teaching, learning and research"* received the lowest score for *Most of the time* of 14, compared to 15 which were found in all other statements. For *Some of the time,* the statements that received lower had equal scores of 9 were:

a) *Selecting and using analysis techniques for determining instructional content;*
b) *Analysing the characteristics of existing and emerging technologies and their potential use; for teaching, learning and research;*
c) *Using an instructional design and development process appropriate for a given project;*
d) *Organizing instructional courses to be searchable and or accessible;*
e) *Designing instructional interventions such as course/subject guides and tutorials;*
f) *Selecting or modifying existing instructional materials;*
g) *Developing instructional materials for the community; and,*
h) *Revising instructional and non-instructional solutions based on data collected from the community.*

The survey respondents were also asked to choose one of the IBSTPI competencies that they thought was the most significant. Most of the respondents wrote that they were more skilled in, *"Communicating effectively in visual, oral and written form"*.

The interviewees were also asked to discuss the instructional design competencies that were related to blended librarianship. The main issues that came up when analysing the interview transcripts on the instructional design competencies were pedagogy skills (9 interviewees), subject expertise (4 interviewees), ability to apply technology (4 interviewees) - where 1 interviewee highlighted the ability to use eResources and the other 2 interviewees communication skills

Nine (9) interviewees from different academic libraries discussed pedagogical skills as being important for integrating teaching, learning and research into the roles of academic librarians. They gave reasons that academic librarians can simplify concepts, thereby assisting lecturers to build on the knowledge delivered (see **Figure 5.14**).

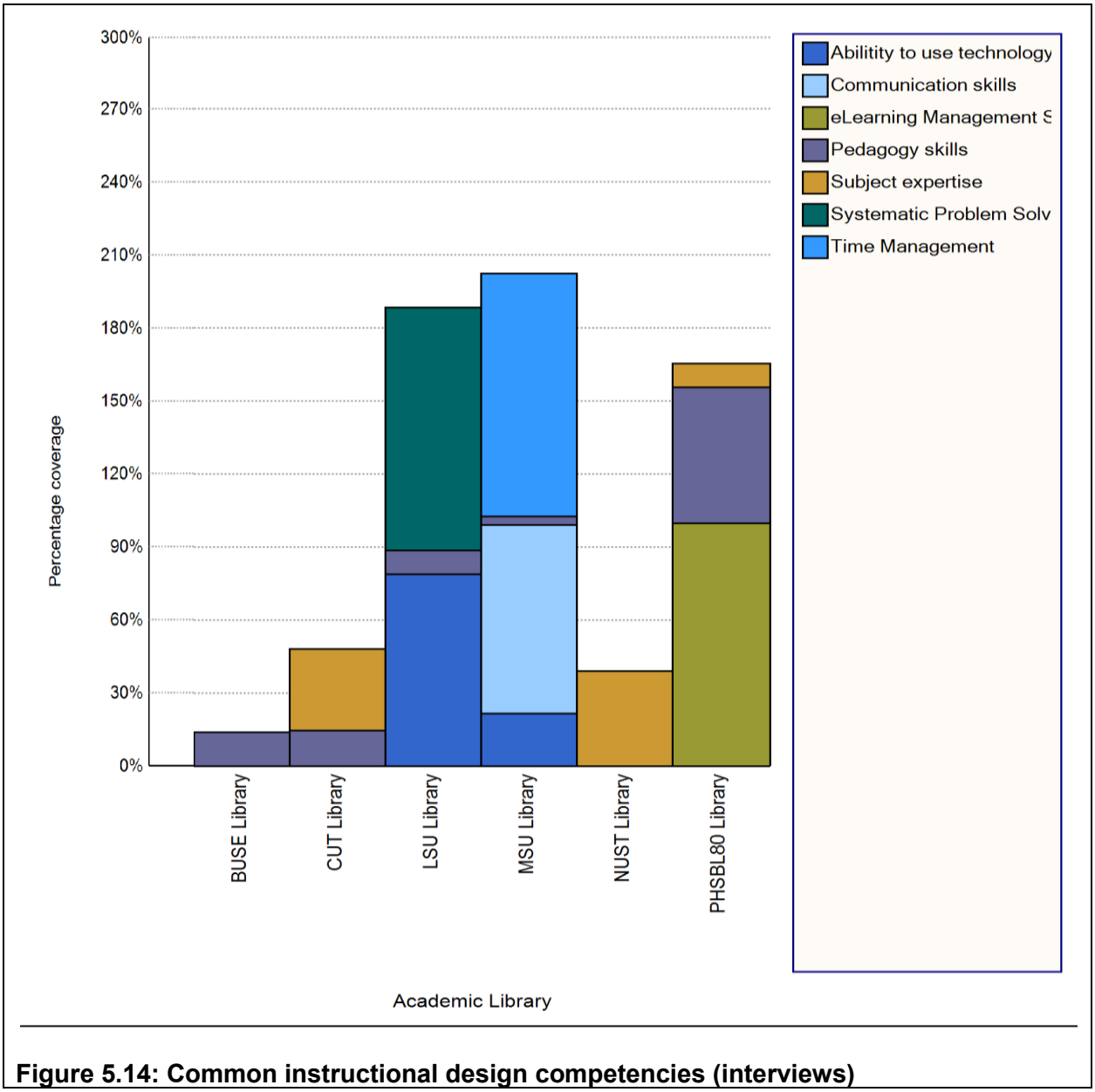


Figure 5.14: Common instructional design competencies (interviews)

It was ascertained from the interviews that it was important for academic librarians to have pedagogical skills because they could *"improve lesson delivery and boost the morale of the students"*, to catch their attention - and to handle difficult situations with students. An Assistant Librarian explained the use of pedagogy in students' practical assignments to test their information searching skills:

> ***PHSBL72:*** *"We try as much to put participatory methods so that the learning is experiential rather than theoretical. Here we want to create experiences for the students. We make*

them search for things in their assignments so that it becomes an experience. If it is an experience, it sticks rather than dishing out notes. We are taking approaches which are participatory and experiential.

…then for experiential, people learn by doing. There are some skills that cannot be learnt by watching videos or just taking notes. But if one tries to experience it, it becomes a reality. We are trying to create real situations in the classrooms where students can get the reality from an assignment...We are trying to create that 'wow' effect from the experiences! They have to experience it first-hand to create that wow effect."

Other reasons that were given by the interviewees for the importance of competencies in pedagogy were related to curriculum design through effective lesson planning and the aspiration of experiential learning (see **Figure 5.15**).

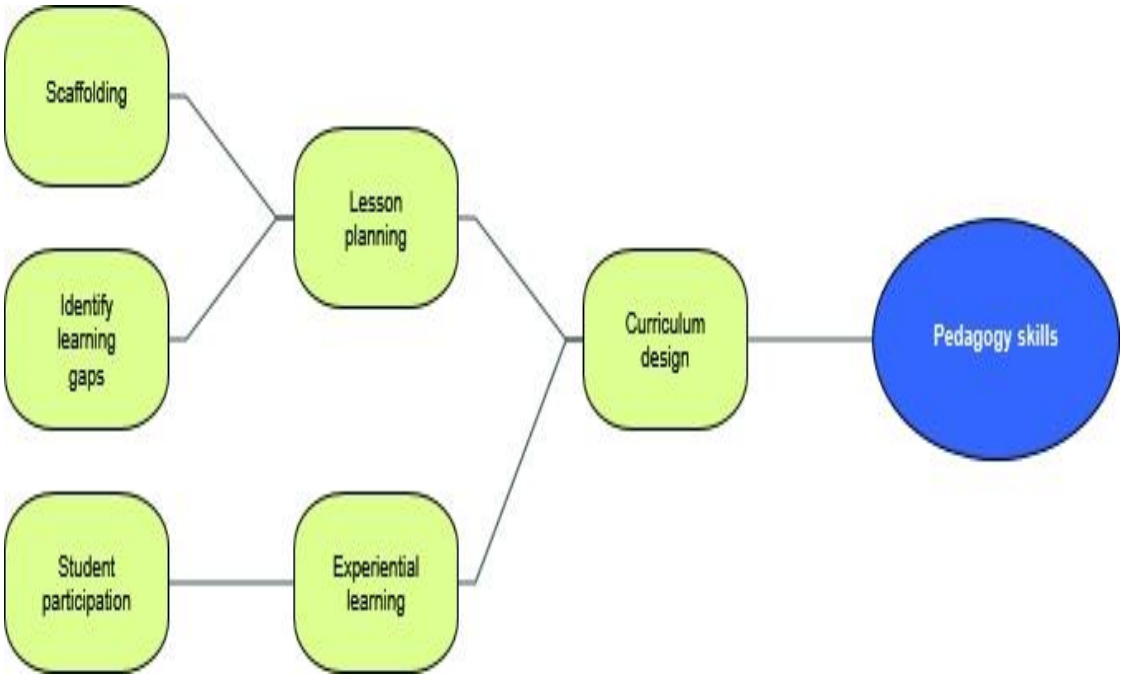


Figure 5.15: Use of pedagogy in instructional design competencies

The academic librarians (from the interviews) who linked curriculum design to effective lesson planning, noted that pedagogical skills helped to identify learning gaps, look at the lesson from a *"hierarchical way of setting/planning"*, or *"scaffolding"* that would enable students to grasp concepts faster and in a logical manner.

However, it was observed by some interview respondents that there were few academic librarians who had formal teaching qualifications. Two interviewees' narratives below indicate the importance that academic librarians have given to the teaching qualification or skills in teaching:

> ***PHSBL61:*** *"Yes, but I think at some point they will need to also have the teaching skills. It's not everyone who can just go and stand in front of people and say I can just teach. I think academic librarians… because of the nature of the qualification need to be equipped with the teaching skills…if we are really going to make an impact."*

> ***PHSBL65:*** *"… they also need a professional qualification or a workshop in instruction so that the knowledge that they have can be effectively delivered to the learner. Maybe a professional qualification or a workshop in instruction or something like training the trainer workshops are very important…Only recently has it become mandatory for them to have…a qualification in further teacher education or an Undergraduate Diploma in Education so that they know teaching is a skill that is required by someone. Of course, you may have the knowledge and everything, but you may not have the skills to teach. Librarians need to move on with the times. Also, the (LIS) school curriculum needs to be changed in line with what is trending internationally..."*

5.6.2 Instructional technology competencies

The survey respondents were selected predefined statements pertaining to instructional technology competencies to get answers to the third research question (see Section 1.7). The statements were calculated for frequencies and then tabulated in MS Excel. **Figure 5.16** shows the tabulations of the instructional technology frequencies.

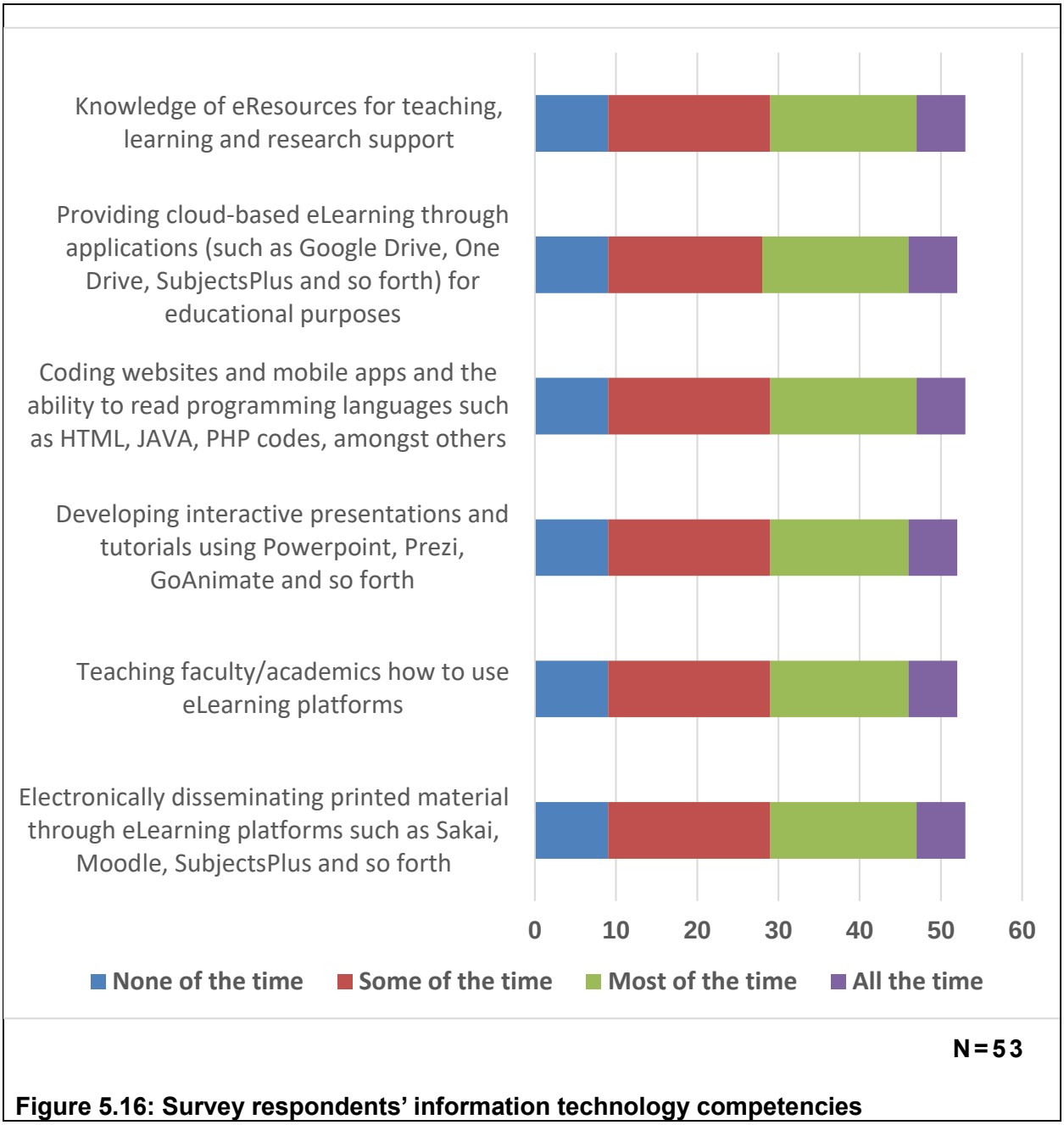


Figure 5.16: Survey respondents' information technology competencies

The statements that received the highest frequencies among the survey respondents were:

a) *Electronically disseminating printed material through eLearning platforms such as Sakai, Moodle, SubjectsPlus and so forth;*

b) *Coding websites and mobile apps and the ability to read programming languages such as HTML, JAVA, PHP codes, amongst others; and,*
c) *Knowledge of eResources for teaching, learning and research support.*

The survey respondents were also required to select one statement that indicated their most significant competence. It was found that some survey respondents (13 out of 53 respondents), selected, "Knowledge of eResources for teaching, learning and research support," as the most significant competence. Furthermore, the researcher found that the instructional technology competencies identified by academic librarians in the interview fell under basic computer literacy (9 interviewees), the application of technology in the teaching and learning process (7 interviewees), use of reference management systems (2 interviewees), social media (2 interviewees), embracing changing user needs (2 interviewees) systems librarianship (2 interviewees) and eLMS (1 interviewee). From the data it was observed that the most important information technology competence that the interviewees required for blended librarianship was basic computer literacy.

The interviewees who placed basic computer literacy as a vital skill for blended librarianship argued that it was vital for teaching ILS and information retrieval in the use of eResources. Most of the interviewees observed that students and lecturers at their universities were not all at the same level in terms of adopting technology. CUT and MSU Libraries where the only exceptions; they have an IT department that was actively teaching basic computer literacy skills to first years, the rest of the academic librarians taught basic computer literacy during the ILS training or informally through one-on-one sessions.

One interview respondent made the following statement to illustrate the importance of basic computer literacy when teaching ILS, information retrieval and eResources:

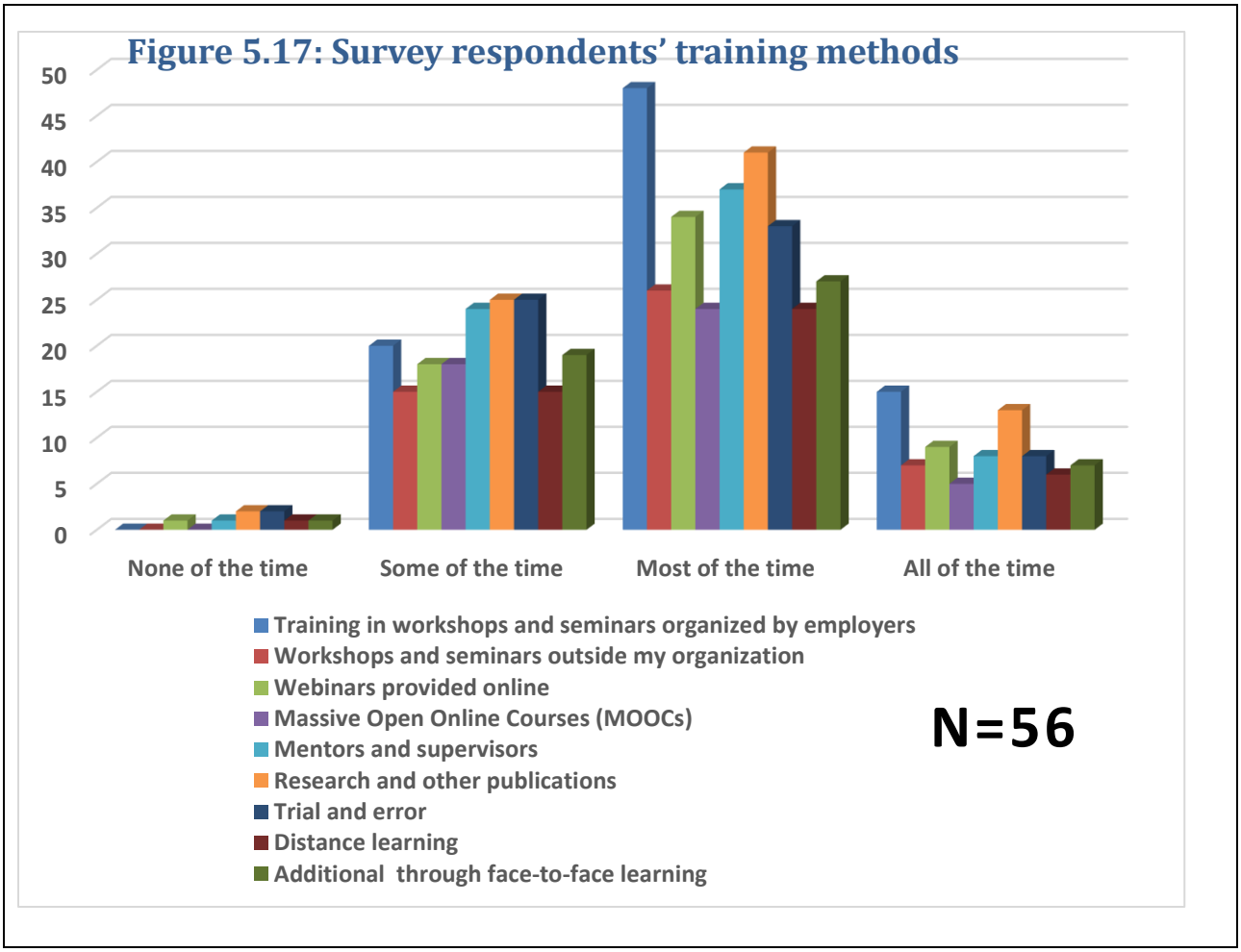
> ***PHSBL72:*** *"They (academic librarians) must have the basic computer literacy skills, electronic information retrieval… general adaptable skills, electronic information search skills because IT is different from the print resource. One must know, for example, in Google…how they can go about it...to impart to their students."*

An Assistant Librarian from PHSBL80 Library who spoke about the eLMS said that faculty members thought he was an IT expert because of embedding in their faculty. Therefore, this librarian was often asked to create and manage lecturer's courses and check for plagiarism in students' assignments:

> ***PHSBL63:*** *"Because of our position in the university, faculty members often think we are IT experts. From that background we need to know how to manage their courses, how to create a course, plagiarism checks and so forth... So, one needs to be tech savvy."*

5.6.3 Methods used to gain competencies

Figure 5.17 reports how academic librarians surveyed gain their skills for instructional design and instructional technology, which are the core competencies of blended librarianship.



From Figure 5.17 it is evident that the survey respondents' highest preferred method of gaining competencies is via, "*I read research and other publications"* (frequency score of 78), followed by, *"I learn through training in workshops and seminars organised by my employers"* (which had a frequency score of 64) – respondents could choose more than one option.

The statements that received the least frequency were, *"I learn through classes available in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on the Internet"* and *"I have taken additional courses or studies through distance education"* (both with a frequency score of 43).

Figure 5.18 diagrammatically captures the relationships that were seen in the methods used by the academic librarians surveyed to gain blended librarianship competencies.

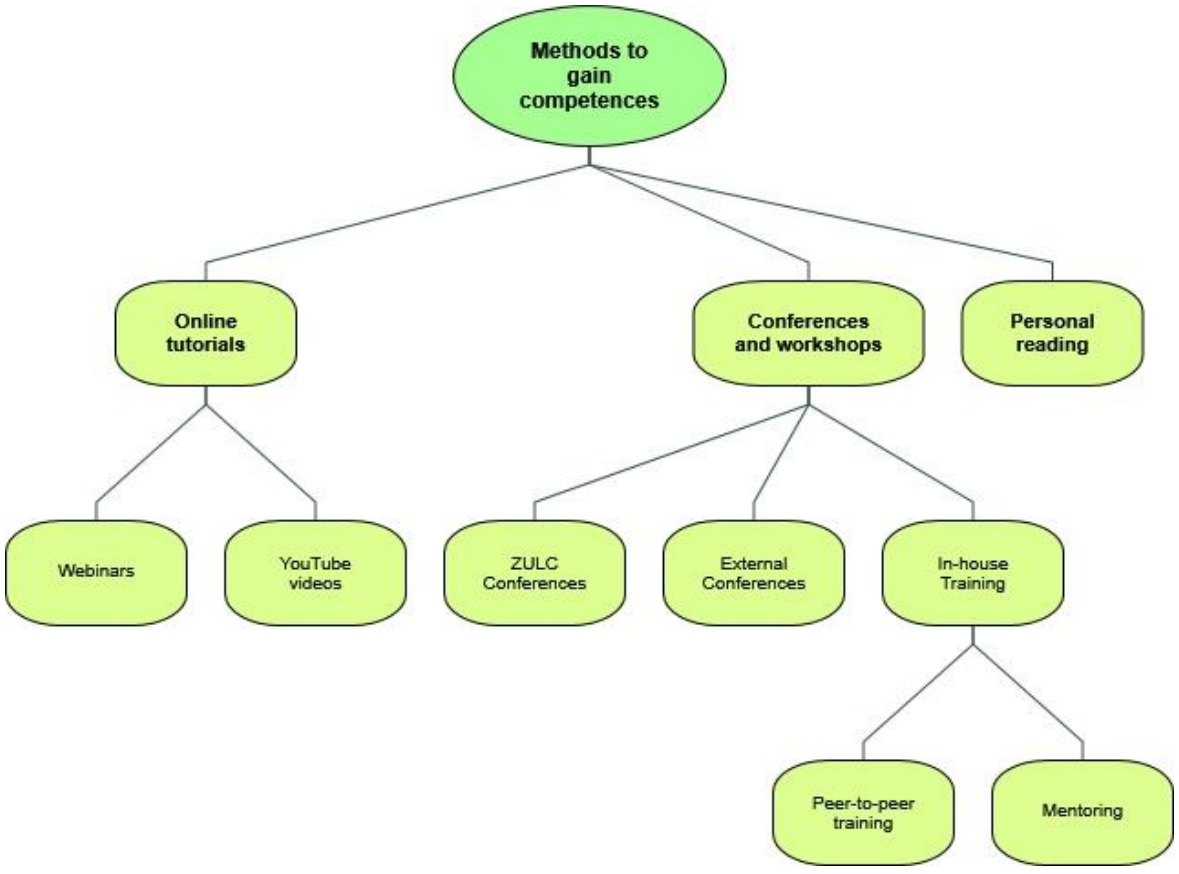


Figure 5.18: Methods used to gain competencies

The survey respondents were asked to justify the reasons for the training method selections they made (as captured in Figure 5.18). The reasons for using some of the methods were based on the time that the academic librarian had to learn, the experience that was sought - especially through trial and error, *"to keep up with the current trends"* and to *"effectively discharge duties"*. Some of the respondents also noted that they used these methods because their libraries lacked funds to send them for training and so further reading, online learning and the employers' workshops were the *"available options"* they could use.

The interviewees were also asked to detail the methods that they used to obtain competencies for their blended roles. It was found that the most common methods named by the interviewees had three clear-cut categories: conferences and workshops that included ZULC organised workshops or internal workshops where peer-to-peer training was conducted (15 cases), online tutorials that included webinars and YouTube videos (7 cases), and lastly, personal reading (2 cases). The interviewees claimed that they experienced peer-to-peer teaching through:

a) Tech savvy academic librarians who could teach skills they had learnt through workshops, trial and error and research;
b) Systems or Technology Librarians who could teach academic librarians new technologies; and,
c) An academic librarian could request a university staff member for one-on-one training on an application tool.

5.7 Significant events that lead to blended librarianship in Zimbabwean academic libraries

The research question of the study sought to find out the significant events that have led to the institutional work of academic librarians to be transformed into blended librarians (see **Section E** of the research data tools).

The survey respondents were asked to rate statements that indicate significant events that have influenced them to adopt blended librarianship. **Figure 5.19** is a hierarchical tree-map that shows the survey respondents' significant events.

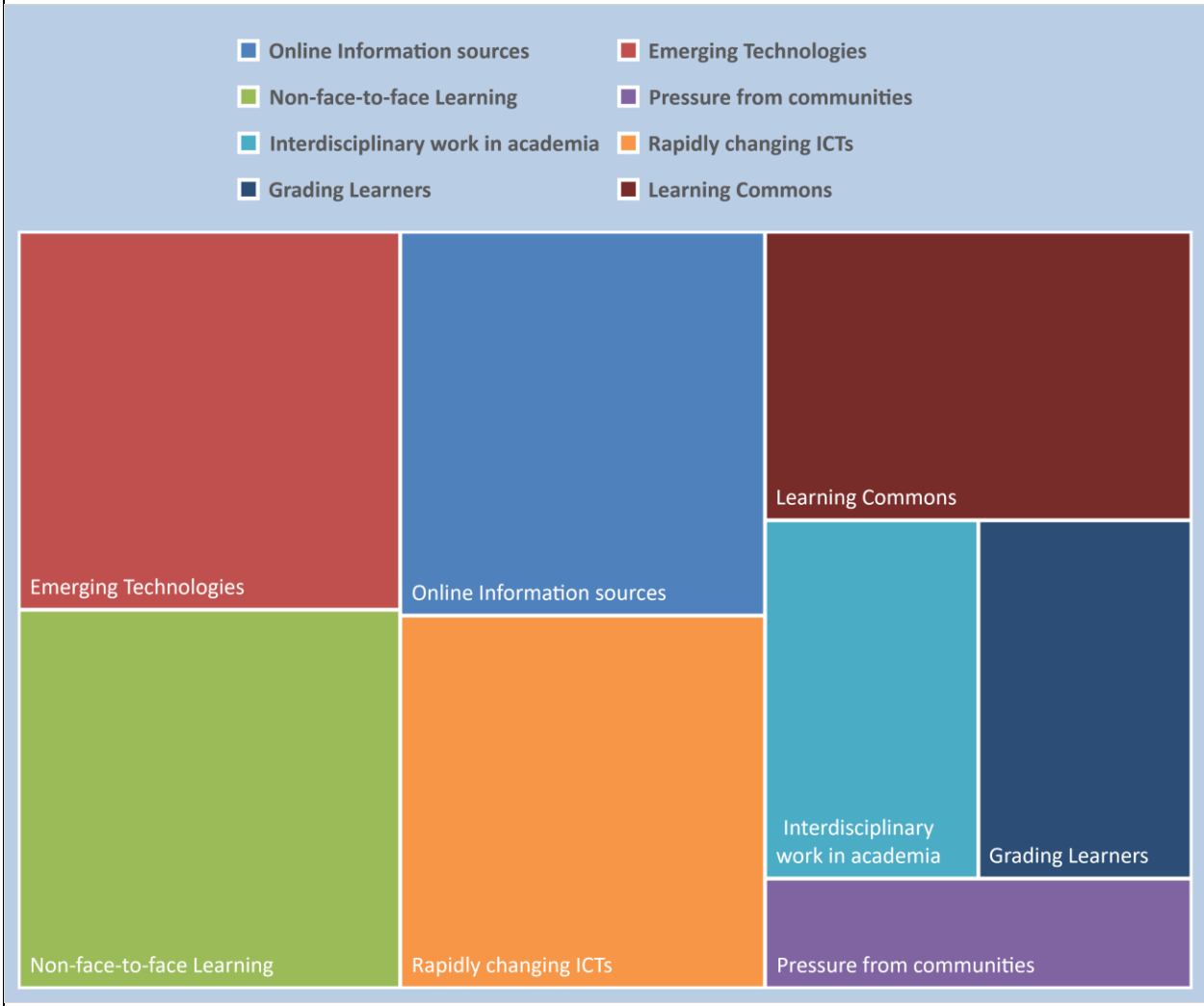


Figure 5.19: Tree-map for survey respondents' significant events **N=52**

The area assigned to each category represents their frequency. Two statements can be seen on the hierarchical tree-map in **Figure 5.19** which indicate most academic

librarians' (34 out of 52 survey respondents) significant events. These statements scored as *High* in the survey were:

a) *The spread of emerging technologies that support teaching, learning and research activities;* and,
b) *The rise of distant learning, eLearning and other non-face-to face learning.*

A significance question was then applied to the survey respondents, where they compared items to each other and selected the most important. The survey respondents were asked to select one event which they believed to be significant in their work role's introduction of blended librarianship. The majority (14 out of 52 respondents) listed *the domination of Google, Wikipedia, Amazon and other online information sources* (which has been summarised as Online information sources in Figure 5.19). The statement that received the least selection (1 out of 52 respondents), was, *the rise of learning commons which integrate computers, software and research in academic libraries.*

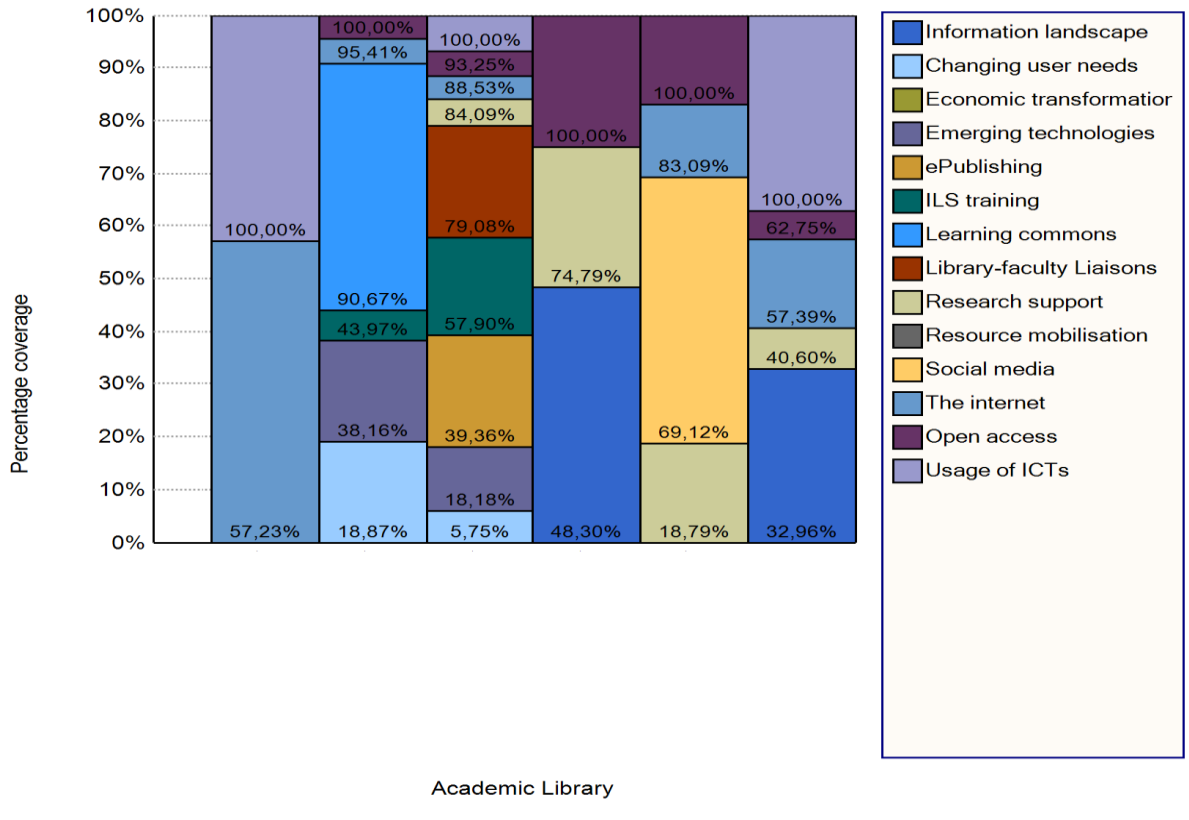


Figure 5.20: Assistant Librarians' significant events-from interviews

From **Figure 5.20**, the most significant event that has influenced blended librarianship in their work roles, discussed by the Assistant Librarians was the *proliferation of the Internet*. The least significant events that the Assistant Librarians highlighted in the interview, were *the library-faculty liaisons* (1), and the *learning commons* (1).

The most significant events in Figure 5.20 revolved around LTAs and the proliferation of the Internet and are captured in the responses given by the academic librarians:

> ***PHSBL62:*** *"The general trend in Zimbabwe has been the use of ICTs in higher learning. It increased over the years and we are now technology driven. We have gone on to increase the bandwidth; it was at 50kbs now we are at 1000kbs. It was that agenda that any meaningful university should be IT-driven, then that also increased the need for library training, especially the use ejournals, databases, eBooks. We started creating more reader spaces for Internet access. All these things changed the landscape of our services and our librarianship."*

> ***PHSBL72:*** *"It's difficult to say which ones because there are interlinked. I will take for instance if we look at the digital world which is what we have used to design our services. It has a bearing on the spaces that we have. If you go to our library, there have been changes in terms of setting up of the spaces. We now have what are called research commons because we are subscribing to a lot of resources, we must provide access. We have information available in digital format linked with it. So, the both work hand in glove. There is no way that we can say that the information will be available without talking about Information Literacy."*

5.7.1 Opportunities to work more closely with faculty and students

The researcher also sought to find out the opportunities that academic librarians must utilise to deliver blended librarianship (see **Table 5.13**).

The themes that came out in the examination of the opportunities listed by the interviewees were categorised in the checklist in Table 5.12. Opportunities are significant events because they show which areas are noteworthy to the academic librarians or to academic libraries.

Table 5.13: Checklist of academic librarians' opportunities

	BUSE Library	CUT Library	LSU Library	MSU Library	NUST Library	PHSBL80 Library
Library-faculty liaison	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use of anti-plagiarism software	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓
University training programmes	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓
Student's dissertations	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓
Use of eLMS	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
Working within the faculty spaces	-	-	✓	-	-	-
The Open Access movement	-	✓	-	-	-	-
Library orientation	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Collection development	-	-	-	✓	-	-
Teaching the ILS course	-	-	-	-	✓	-
Faculty status recognition	-	✓	-	-	-	-
Flexible timetables for teaching ILS and LTAs	-	✓	-	-	-	-
One-on-one sessions	-	✓	-	-	-	-
Liaisons with student representatives	-	-	-	-	-	✓

From the checklist table it is evident that most of the academic librarians are looking for more opportunities to work closely in the teaching, learning and research processes through faculty liaisons. One of the librarians from LSU Library spoke about working with *"Library Ambassadors*", who are a group of students who are selected by the faculty to

represent other students' interests in the library. Faculty liaison was also a gateway for getting into specialised committees such as a university's editorial board; it is in these committees where academic librarians can improve communication and raised awareness about library services.

5.7.3 The scope of academic librarianship in the next 5-10 years.

The academic librarians in both the survey and interviews were queried about their forecast of the scope of academic librarianship in the next 5-10 years. This question can be tied down to the participants' perceptions of what a 21st century Zimbabwean academic library should look like.

Figure 5.21: Key components in the future of academic libraries

The Wordcloud in **Figure 5.21** shows that the future of academic library will rely on these key components: students, faculty, information, resources, literacy, courses, skills and teaching and training.

A further examination into the conversations from both the interview and survey that made up the Wordcloud found in that academic librarians (20 out 52 of the statements) positively indicated that the academic library would have a future in IT-related goals, such as the hybrid library (both paper and eResources combined), an increased use in eResources, leading to fewer physical library visits, an increased use of mobile technologies, use of video chat/conference facilities for circulation and more spaces to accommodate Internet access and personal research. Two interviewees pointed out that the roles of academic librarians would not necessarily change through technology, but rather technology was there to make academic librarians' work more efficient:

> ***PHSBL72:*** *"We are now occupying the spaces that were traditionally outside our scope, but technology is making this easier. We are doing much, but we are using less energy in the process because we are using the new technologies...we are simply doing the same thing, and doing it differently, while employing the use of technology…The roles may not change per se, but the way people do things is changing daily…The roles are going to be changing in response to technology, user behaviours which might be linked to technologies as well and in response to the ever-changing user environment."*

> ***PHSBL60:*** *"…the challenge that I have right now thinking about the next 5-10 years is coming from judging, the last 5 years. Not much has changed, but I believe that in the next 5-10 years, I think we will still be 80% of where academic librarianship is right now and 20% on the new things that would have been brought in by this dynamic technology. All librarians would be blended librarians because every librarian seems to be working on acquiring new skills and different skills."*

Very few interview and survey respondents (3 cases) had negative perspectives about the future of the Zimbabwean academic library's future. These respondents who had negative perspectives about the future of the academic library touched on issues of professional development in the academic library and the teaching roles of academic librarians. The respondent who queried the future of academic librarians in the teaching roles, reacted that, "*Lecturers do not consider librarians as teachers, so librarians won't get enough space"*, reflecting the tensions that academic librarians may face when exercising the teaching roles.

One of the survey respondents stated that there would not be much change in the professional development of the academic library: "*It's not going to change much"*, perhaps indicating that this respondent did not see academic libraries in Zimbabwe changing.

5.7.4 Academic librarians' perception of their participation in the next 5-10 years

The academic librarians were asked to give their perspective about their future in 5-10 years' time (see Section D in the instruments). This question was asked to measure the academic librarians' prospects in blended librarianship. Most of the academic librarians (25, including both survey and interview responses) perceived that they would develop professionally within the academic library in the next 5-10 years, gave reasons which included upgrading their qualifications, participating in teaching, advancing technology, taking more job responsibilities in the library and garnering for higher positions in the library. One of the academic librarians who expected to obtain a higher position said: *"I will be somewhere up there in the management. My vision in the next 5 years is to be among the top management in any academic library."*

There were fewer responses for academic librarians who do not see their future in the academic library (5, including both survey and interview responses). These academic librarians stated that they had their career goals set on other departments in the university or institutions which were outside the university setting.

5.8 Summarising the adoption of blended librarianship in Zimbabwe

Therefore, adopting blended librarianship relies on a multi-layered network of states and events. **Figure 5.22** attempts to summarise the findings and conclusions that have been drawn from the study into a complex network of relationships around blended librarianship in Zimbabwe. However, it must be noted that the presence of each event and state, depends entirely on the socio-cultural and historical factors present at a library. Hence the statements that have been put in between an event and a state, state to state or event to event, show the relationship that can be traced.

Multiple relationships exist in Figure 5.22. The researcher made the interpretation of the network of relationships reading from the bottom-up.

For example, ZULC, Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) and Senate Boards, through accreditation regulations and policies, influence academic libraries to create curricula that support classroom learning, eLMS and the teaching of ILS.

Two distinct forms of ILS were found, the formal and the informal, that were aligned to the academic library's user support and liaison services. The formal ILS course followed a curriculum which was suited to the community needs, took recognition of the ZULC guidelines, was formally endorsed by the university Senate Board (which is answerable to ZimCHE). The formal ILS course was either taught within the classroom (as in BUSE, CUT and MSU libraries) or was taught through eLMS as in PHSBL80 Library. The academic librarians had to design a curriculum for classroom tutorials and there was a need to create timetables for the delivery of ILS in the classroom. It was also found that libraries which taught the formal ILS course, also taught ILS informally.

The informal teaching of ILS took cognisance of community needs and was not supported by policies and regulations from Senate Boards. The libraries that solely taught ILS informally did so as part of their user support and liaisons services only. The informal ILS was taught either through classroom demonstrations or one-on-one sessions with the academic librarians.

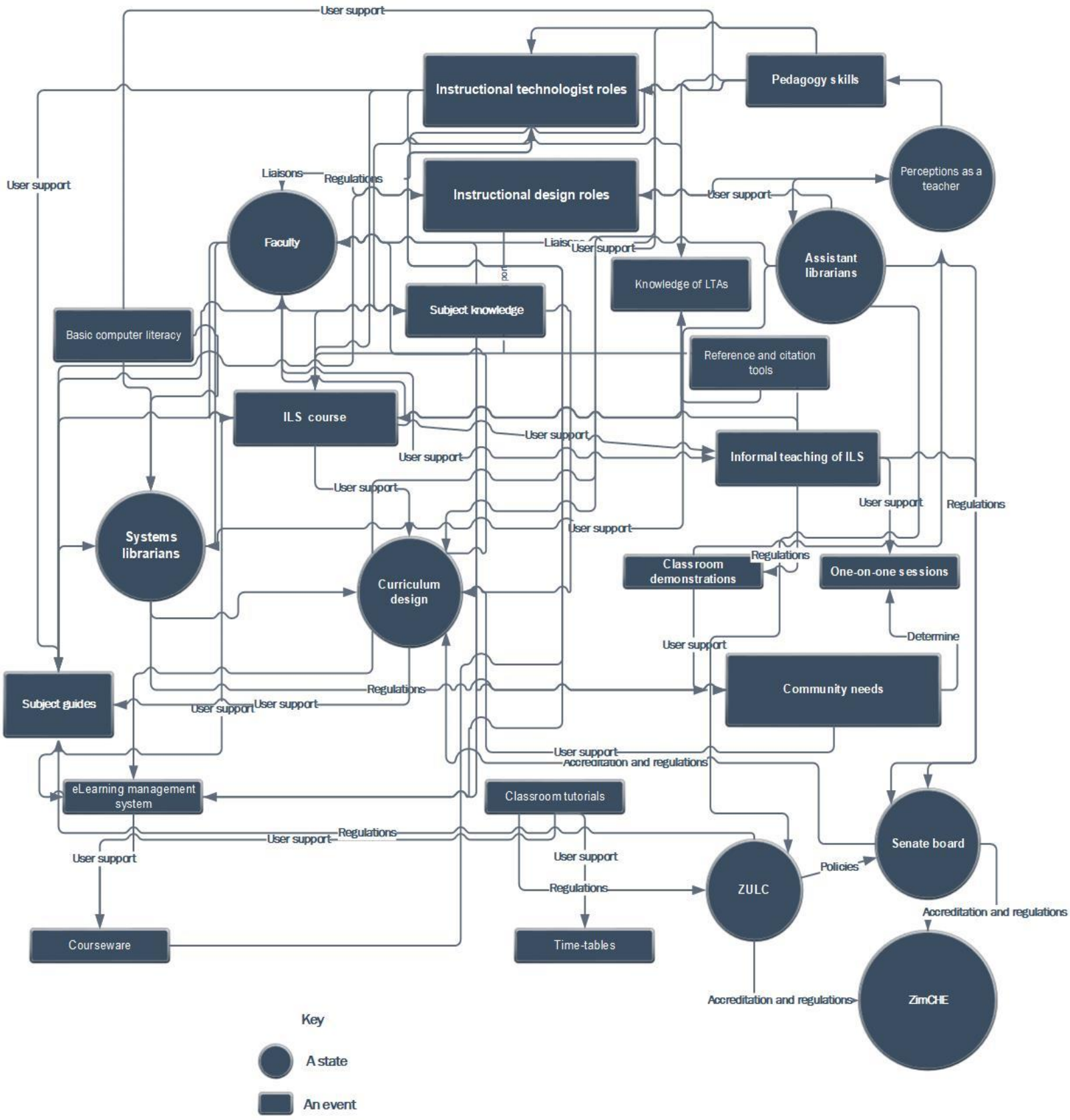


Figure 5.22: Complex network of relationships in blended librarianship in Zimbabwe

The academic librarians (for example Assistant Librarians) had developed pedagogical skills, had knowledge of LTAs such as referencing and citation tools as well subject knowledge. The competencies were used in roles that pertained to instructional design and instructional technology. Hence the academic librarians had started identify themselves as teachers.

Academic librarians relied on Systems/Technology Librarians to augment the IT skills that they lacked. The Systems Librarians were helpful in creating subject guides, eLMS, teaching basic computer literacy skills and LTAs to the academic librarians. The Systems Librarians also provided user support to the academic librarians to ensure that the systems were working.

The academic librarians also liaised with faculty so that the ILS course, informal teaching of ILS, eLMS, and subject guides were relevant to the faculty needs.

5.9 Chapter summary

Chapter 5 presented five sets of findings emanating from this study. The findings were presented according to the research questions. The data that was presented came from the semi-structured-questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and document research from the ZULC guidelines. The chapter presented data using narrative descriptions, matrix displays and network displays. The primary finding of this study was that blended librarianship has been adopted in the selected Zimbabwean libraries through the teaching of ILS and LTAs. Each institution had adopted blended librarianship in its own way that reflected the socio-cultural and historical aspects in the environment. Four (4) different categories of blended librarianship emerged from the data; that is “transcending blended librarians”, “partially blended librarians”, “intermittent blended librarians” and “aspiring blended librarians”, reflecting each institution’s level of instructional technology and instructional design roles.

It was also found that academic librarians' involvement in teaching ILS and LTAs, made them perceive themselves as teachers, and were also receiving positive feedback from the university communities. However, academic librarians in the study were yet to receive formal recognition as academic staff. Academic librarians felt that they needed teaching and subject qualifications to be considered on par with lecturing staff. A further finding was that the academic librarians were relying on pedagogical skills and basic computer literacy when delivering blended roles. The last finding in the chapter was that the academic librarians felt technology had a huge impact in their roles as it had created new ways of doing traditional responsibilities. The following discussion of main findings chapter gathers significant issues from the textual descriptions from this chapter which are discussed in the light of the Theoretical Framework and the Literature Review.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF MAIN FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction and overview

The purpose of this interpretive phenomenological study was to explore the phenomenon of the Zimbabwean academic librarian's professional identity which has been evolving into blended librarianship through institutional work. The researcher explored this phenomenon because by understanding the professional identity of Zimbabwean academic librarians in the context of the theory-practice-divide, solutions could be found on how to reduce theory-practice-divide in the LIS profession.

The discussion that follows develops the general structure of the phenomena by integrating the research findings from Chapter 5, with the theoretical framework in Chapter 2 and the literature review in Chapter 3 and the methodology in Chapter 4.

6.2 Demographic details of the respondents and blended librarianship

Table 5.1 shows that most of the survey respondents' number of years in academic librarianship practice coincide with the establishment and adoption of blended librarianship in the literature (Bell and Shank, 2007, 2011; Sinclair, 2009; Corrall, 2010; Nielsen, 2013; Perini, 2015). The researcher assumed that the number of years in practice of academic librarians could strengthen the findings of the survey. This is because the respondents of the survey may have come across the principles of blended librarianship through practice, training or independent research during the decade. The approach to use 10 years of continuous service as an indicator of a veteran academic librarian was also used by Sare and Edward Bales (2014) to study the professional identity of academic librarians across universities in North America. This means that most of the respondents in the survey may be classified as veteran academic librarians thereby strengthening the findings for generalisation into similar contexts.

6.3 Blended librarianship has been adopted through academic librarians' teaching roles

The first research question sought to establish how Zimbabwean academic librarians have adopted blended librarianship. The academic librarians in this study showed that they had adopted blended librarianship through liaisons in teaching ILS and LTAs, information retrieval, basic computer literacy and LTAs such as reference and citation managers (for example Mendeley). Academic librarians believed that they teach ILS to the students and faculty to improve their community's lifelong learning skills. It was found that both instructional technologist roles and instructional design roles were present among the academic librarians in the study, however, the level of expertise varied between what the researcher called transcending, partially librarians, intermittent and aspiring blended librarians (see Figure 5.10).

In the theory of LPP, Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that members of a profession move from novice (or newcomer) to expert (or old-timer), both forms reflecting different levels of mastery of the skills. This transition is seen in the first research question, where different levels of blended librarianship were found in the selected academic libraries because of the access to resources that was given to academic librarians to participate legitimately. The researcher has deduced that the resources that determine legitimate participation of the academic librarians to become blended librarians is the existence of polices that support ILS, autonomy to teach ILS, modernised ICTs infrastructure, teaching facilities, communication and liaisons with the community and an organised learning curriculum. This study has also established that this transition is not a straight path, as there are levels in between each institution's social processes, where access to resources, intercedes the transition from novice to expert.

Although the ILS course was taught informally by some of the academic librarians (for example aspiring blended librarians), the purposes of ILS were common, and it is plausible that it can fit into instructional design roles. Systematic literature reviews about blended librarianship have found that the teaching of ILS has led to academic librarians to be identified as teachers in their communities (Vassilakaki and Moniarou-

Papaconstantinou, 2015: 41). This study found that ILS was integrated into the teaching needs that were identified by either the lecturer or the students because the academic librarians would seek to meet the needs of their community (see Figure 5.22). Studies such as that by Manuell and Adams (2016) confirm the role played by academic librarians in the delivery of ILS and its integration into specific subjects, taking note that collaborations are needed to realise the learning outcomes. In this study, the academic librarians had created collaborations with their community (faculty and students), the Systems Librarians and Communication Skills department to teach ILS and LTAs. The librarians relied on the collaborations to augment the skills that they lacked in subject knowledge and the use of ICTs in the teaching, learning and research processes. Hence, academic librarians' collaborations have been centred around the access to resources to participate legitimately as blended librarians in each university.

One of the key features of CoPs identified by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger and Trayner (2015) has been the ability of the individuals within a CoP to come together share information, insight, and advice to solve problems by creating tools, standards, generic designs, manuals, and other documents. In Section 5.3.2, it was found that academic libraries created tools such as subject guides for their faculty to improve access to information and taught their communities how to use LTAs to improve the usage of information. Moreover, ZULC acted as a CoP, where academic librarians would share best practices, which would act as standards, and impart competencies that were critical for academic librarians.

The subject guides that were referred in the data (see Section 5.3.2), were usually subject-related eResources that were stacked together for a faculty or a department within the faculty, and were also used to disseminate information related to open educational resources on the Internet.The general theme in Section 5.3.2 was in tandem with Bell and Shank (2007: 2-3) who assert that "instructional design is the systematic creation of an educational experience that will help students achieve a specified set of learning outcomes" through "courseware management systems" or eLMS "that can electronically disseminate their traditional materials". However, the data from the study

suggests that academic librarians have worked hard in creating subject guides, but these guides have failed to have a positive influence on lecturers resulting in students' low usage (see narrative from interviewee PHSBL75 from Section 5.3.2). This finding was consistent with Tchangalova and Feigley (2008) and York and Vance (2009) who observed that when academic librarians do not target lecturers when creating subject guides, the lecturers do not recommend students to use the guides, leading to low usage. The data seem to pinpoint the low usage of subject guides on the lack of cooperation between the academic library and the lecturers (see the narrative from PHSBL75 in Section 5.3.2). The lack of cooperation between the faculty and the library in the creation of subject guides raises questions on the level of liaison between these two entities. Another possibility may be that faculty members may lack the skills to use the subject guides, and thereby fail to give supportive input to the library.

The rationale for creating subject guides might be found in Sales and Pinto's (2017: 16) observation that academic librarians should provide ILS and resources that "cannot be separated from the socio-instrumental practices that are specific to each domain of knowledge". In Section 5.3.2.1, it was seen how academic librarians used assessments of user technology needs, and targeted interventions that were specific to each context. This included the use of formal and informal assessment methods (mostly). However, the academic librarian's lack of subject knowledge may be a cause of concern, as the subject guides may not touch the socio-instrumental processes of each domain, thereby resulting in the low usage of the guides. The subject guides need to be made relevant for each course by building a knowledge base that is in sync with the classroom tutorials delivered by the lecturers.

It was also found that although the academic librarians had built their subject guides around eResources, digital tools and locations of print resources that are related to the faculties that they serve, these were static pages which are not interactive. Only one library, PHSBL80 Library (under the transcending blended librarian's category in Figure 5.10) had an active learning management system (see Sections 5.3.2 and 5.4.1).The lack of interactive subject guides might be attributed to the observation by Jaguszewski and

Williams (2013) that libraries lack instructional designers and/or educational technologists. In this study, the academic librarians worked with the Systems Librarians to create their subject guides. Though Systems Librarians may have the technical knowledge that pertains to ICTs, they are not educational technologists or instructional designers, hence their idea of what may appeal to the student and faculty may always not work . Perhaps, without instructional designers who work with academic librarians, subject guides tend to have a low impact in their communities.

6.3.1 Liaison in teaching ILS and technologies

The data also seemed to suggest that academic librarians in partially, intermittent and aspiring blended librarianship institutions preferred face-to-face delivery of teaching and demonstrations, rather than the use of online platforms such as the eLMS (see Section 5.4). Carroll, Tchangalova and Harrington (2016) criticised static eLMS such as subject guides, arguing that they offered a passive learning experience that could lead to a potential low-level retention of ILS. Face-to-face delivery of ILS may be preferred by the academic librarians because it affords the opportunity to meet and interact with the learners and because most academic libraries do not have eLMS. However, it is not conclusive that face-to-face learning may not be as effective as blended and online learning since Anderson and May (2010) have found that face-to-face instruction to be equally effective.

The tasks that qualified as instructional technologist roles were the teaching of LTAs, such as reference citation management tools, online information retrieval and the OPAC. However, the teaching of LTAs might be hampered by a realisation that academic libraries may not have the financial resources to buy or subscribe to some LTAs. A Library Board member from CUT Library observed that EndNote, one of the LTAs, had been discontinued because of the costs in subscribing it, by stating that, *"…at some point we also used EndNote, but then we did not subscribe to it because it is expensive*." A common trend among the academic libraries was to rely on Open Source software (for example Mendeley and Zotero) that provided the same functions as the LTAs that needed

subscriptions or licensing. MacMillan (2012: 561) also agrees that LTAs such as Mendeley and Zotero, are free and reduce the information overload in today's digital information environment.

It may be deduced from this discussion that most of the LTAs that are being used in the selected academic libraries revolve around the reference and citation management. This may be due to the academic librarian's realisation that reference, and citation management resources are necessary for students to become information literate, that is, to ethically use information. Researchers such as Childress (2011: 150) have stressed the need for academic librarians to have an increasing participation in the teaching and demonstration of reference and citation software. The data in this study, in Table 5.13, also pinpointed that academic librarians were looking for opportunities to increase their participation in teaching reference and citation managers.

6.3.2 Lack of supportive resources

Academic libraries also lacked requisite facilities that are used in blended librarianship, for example, academic libraries are understaffed (see interviewee PHSBL79 in Section 5.3.4) and lacked classrooms. This finding was contrasted to LPP, were Lave and Wenger (1991: 101-103) opined that "participation involving technology is especially significant because the artefacts used within a cultural practice carry a substantial portion of that practice's heritage". This was taken to mean that there were certain tools that academic librarians needed to be identified as blended librarians because they represented what a blended librarian does, which is engaging in instructional design and instructional technology.

Without access to the key technologies, most academic libraries (5 out 6) in the study were still participating at the periphery in teaching, learning and research. Lave and Wenger (1991) argued that "peripheral participation", is the stage "where the academic librarians are restricted from participating more fully, often legitimately through their work practice". An observation that was made by Corrall and Keates (2010) was that academic librarians who were still participating at the peripheral level in their faculties, faced

difficulties in using the available technology to reach out to students. It may be speculated then that the low-level usage of the subject guides, might be linked to the peripheral participation of academic librarians.

Additionally, peripherality in this study was observed where the academic librarians believed that the learning outcomes might be easier to see if the ILS course was formalised, because they would use the goals of the curricula to measure their successes (see Table 5.11). This finding highlighted the image and status that was attached to the academic librarians in their universities. To this end, Walsh (2011: 8) sees ILS training as the opportunity where academic librarians have their most extensive contact with students.

Therefore, the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016) has placed a mandate on the academic libraries to introduce the ILS course. The Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016) guidelines also fit into the theory of CoPs and the framework of LPP, if we follow Lave and Wenger's (1991: 53) propositions that CoPs are made up of individuals who share the same interest and work towards the same goal. Although the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016) encourages its members to use its standards, the standards are not in terms of LPP: a “condition for membership”, but are an “evolving form of membership.” That is why each academic library has been given a mandate to introduce the ILS course to its communities. The Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016) has submitted the guidelines to the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) which is a higher body that accredits higher learning, thus making the guidelines formal standards. The section that covers ILS in the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016: 10) guidelines avers that:

> *“ZULC members shall be responsible for producing competent graduates who are information literate, critical thinkers and independent learners who can use information and information communication technologies legally and ethically. In this regard, the ZULC member libraries shall be responsible for curricula development in line with technological, information and academic developments.”*

Despite the existence of the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016: iii)

guidelines, the adoption of the ILS course has depended on the organisational culture from which the academic library emanates (see Section 5.3.1 and 5.4). For example, it was found that the university administration and lecturer's understanding of the ILS have been critical elements in adopting the ILS course. This finding matched that of Oakleaf (2011: 63) that many faculty and institutional administrators consider ILS standards as library-centric standards, rather than outcomes that should be achieved during a student's university experience. This has been seen in the case of aspiring blended librarians such as at NUST Library and LSU Library, where the ILS course has failed to be established (see Section 5.3.1). An academic librarian from LSU Library stated that the university administration felt that *"librarians should make a way of teaching it (ILS), but it must not be examinable because the students have so much workload."* Moreover, the academic librarians in the study, have specified that when issues concerning ILS are not formalised, students tend to relax, and this leads to the low usage of the academic librarian's blended roles. One academic librarian observed that students *"do not consider ILS seriously if it is not assessed."*

Lave and Wenger (1991: 103-104), point out that there can be an ambivalent status in LPP, when members of a CoP, like academic librarians "participate legitimately, but not peripherally, in that they are not given productive access to activity" in the CoP. This scenario has been played out in the data, where the academic librarians taught ILS, but were not given access to autonomy, through subtle and pervasive ways such as changing the allocation of the ILS examination question's marks without the librarian's knowledge, omitting the ILS examination questions altogether, and denial of teaching slots (see Section 5.3.1.1 and 5.3.1.1.1). Julien and Pecoskie (2009: 151) have termed the above relationship between faculty and the library, as "the gift of time", whereby academic librarians play a subservient role with unequal power relationships and the provision of in-class time to teach ILS is perceived as a "gift" from the faculty member. In this study, the gift of time was also expressed by an interviewee from BUSE Library (see PHSBL78 in Section 5.4.3), who narrated that lecturers treated academic librarians as "babysitters" to watch over their classes, when lecturers went away for other business. This interviewee also noted that lecturers did not want academic librarians to participate in their lectures or integrate ILS into their courses. Perhaps the lecturers felt threatened by the academic

librarian's participation in the teaching, learning and research process, because they would be treated as equals. The demarcation between academic and non-academic staff may have led to lecturers feeling they have a privileged position over the academic librarians.

The theme of lacking autonomy in teaching ILS was also echoed in all libraries including LSU Library and NUST Library which were planning to work with the Communication Skills Department for their proposed ILS course. These libraries had taken the example from other academic libraries who had adopted the ILS course by partnering with the Communication Skills Department, as this was an academic department that had curricula with closely fitting goals.

6.3.3 Lack of library assessments on the use of technologies

In spite of the recommendations by Bell and Shank (2007: 43) that the instructional design process should not be taken on in a haphazard manner and without clearly stated outcomes that can be measured, most of the academic librarians in the study usually relied on their observations in class and informal recommendations from lecturers (see Section 5.3.4). The selected academic librarians perceived that acting on the teaching, learning and research process using their observations was a fulfillment of systematic problem-solving procedures such as ADDIE (see Section 5.3.4 and Table 5.7). Campbell (2014: 144) sees an overlap in some of the steps in the ADDIE model, for instance, design and development phases. Therefore, it may be probable that ADDIE is being implemented, though the academic librarians have done so unconsciously or haphazardly as seen in the data. However, the challenge comes when some of the observations are a result of the academic librarian's gut feelings or instinct, rather than empirical evidence which may lead to misdiagnosing community problems.

One of the key reasons why academic librarians could not fully implement the ADDIE process was the lack time because the academic librarians had other duties that they were expected to achieve within their libraries (see Table 5.7). In tandem, Bell and Shank (2007: 43) accept that time to fully implement all the steps in ADDIE might not be possible and they recommend that academic librarians should adopt an "instructional designer's

mindset". The researcher has assumed that the lack of time to follow the ADDIE process, due to the academic librarian's juggling of multiple responsibilities makes it difficult to follow an instructional designer's mind-set, because the academic librarian must make a concrete choice to attend to students or fulfil other library duties. In the case where library duties are urgent, the librarian has no choice but to leave the student unattended.

Therefore, scholars such as Davies-Hoffman et al. (2013) argued that ADDIE cannot predict all the learning styles of students, and there may be a chance that some of the students' needs may not be met. Moreover, the academic librarians who taught ILS and LTAs complained that the skills they were imparting cannot be mastered in one session; hence they needed more time to teach which they had difficulties in obtaining. Furthermore, the academic librarian's lack of subject knowledge may have made it difficult to utilise the instructional designer's mind-set (see Section 5.5.3), because each subject has a specific way of answering research questions, and academic librarians were only relying mainly on generalised information.

6.4 Shifting perceptions due to academic librarians' involvement in teaching ILS and technologies

In their theory of LPP, Lave and Wenger (1991: 50-52) argue that perceiving identities requires an examination into the "whole" person acting in the world taking into consideration the work conduct and how it has evolved, and is "continuously renewed by different sets of relations". When examining academic librarians acting in the social world, Bell and Shank (2007: 18) have put forward that blended librarianship is not equitable to multitasking, but "wearing many hats in the workplace", that is, taking care of a number of different responsibilities in the library. It was found that Assistant Librarians saw themselves as blended librarians because they were taking care of many different responsibilities in the library such as offering faculty liaisons, teaching ILS and LTAs and using their job responsibilities to change the negative stereotypes about librarians in their university (see Section 5.5.1). The researcher agrees that the tasks stated by the academic librarians are consistent with the literature of blended librarianship, hence they are justified to see themselves as blended librarians.

Lave and Wenger (1991) also argue that individuals who are in a CoP begin as novices and eventually because of the "mastery of knowledge and skills", the novice moves from newcomers towards "full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community." In the same way, the academic librarians in the study are moving towards some form of mastery in their blended roles. That is why the researcher has decided to name the tentative model in Figure 5.10 as *"Institutions in transition to become blended librarians"* to highlight the insight that academic librarians are not at the same level in blended librarianship. This is not a good or bad thing, but something that is typical in phenomenology as Wertz et al. (2011: 127) explain that phenomenology should capture "specific contextual parameters such as at very high levels, at typical mid-levels, and/or at lower, more context-bound levels." In this study, it was found that the researcher hypothesised that there are transcending, partially, intermittent and aspiring blended librarians, each category representing a different level of the selected academic libraries staff member's phenomenological account.

Furthermore, Mckinney and Wheeler's (2015) conceptions of professional identities of academic librarians were investigated in Section 5.5.1 and it was found that most academic librarians saw themselves as a *"Librarian who teaches"* (see Figure 5.11). Mckinney and Wheeler (2015) assert that academic librarians who fall into this category are reluctant to refer to themselves as lecturers, but refer to their activities among learner and faculty as "teaching". On the same note, the academic librarians in this study perceived that their teaching could be equated with that of lecturers, but they were cautious to mention that they needed formal subject qualifications and skills in teaching and subject expertise to be at par with the lecturers (see Section 5.5.3).The literature on identity theories calls this scenario in Section 5.5.3, an identity dilemma, which occurs when the "work of claiming and maintaining valued identities is complicated by conflicting sets of normative expectations, and by the holding of 'contradictory' identities" (Dunn and Creek, 2015: 261). In this study, the valued identity is the *"Librarian who teaches"*, which is complicated by academic librarian's lack of subject and teaching qualifications, negative stereotypes and the subservient role to faculty, which are contradictory identities.

In the terminology of Lave and Wenger (1991), it may be argued that academic librarians in the study were no longer operating at the "periphery" in their faculties, but had not yet reached the core, where they had a sense of identity as "master practitioners" who had teaching and subject qualifications within their faculty community. This sentiment has also been shared by participants in studies such as Mckinney and Wheeler (2015) who averred that LIS qualifications are not enough for academic librarians to regard them as teachers. The researcher may allude the academic librarian's teaching identity to what Dunn and Creek (2015: 265) have presented as a deviant-either-way, whereby to conform to any one identity (teacher or librarian) may have the consequence of being labelled simultaneously a "deviant" and a "conformist". Academic librarians had to choose if they are librarians or teachers, and the *"Librarians who teaches"*, seems to be the middle ground, a deviant-either-way.

The image of the librarian who teaches was also seen in how the academic librarians taught ILS in the library, instead of scavenging for free periods and classrooms from lecturers. These academic librarians may have thought that the academic library was the ideal space for teaching, learning and research to occur, hence they worked at creating learning commons, providing research support and the teaching of the formal ILS modules.

6.4.1 Subject librarianship has a dominant role in the academic librarians' roles

It was found that 91% of the survey respondents (see Section 5.5.3.1) agreed that subject librarianship was the most effective mode of delivering teaching, learning and research needs. Both the survey respondents and the interviewees thought that subject librarianship could lead to better subject knowledge, better service delivery, the intertwining of blended librarianship with subject librarianship, providing information to specialist information groups and improvement in faculty liaisons (see Table 5.12). However, the literature established that there is no consensus whether academic librarians should have subject expertise to be effective in the teaching, learning and research processes. In discussions on the criteria of subject librarians, the need for a subject librarian to have a formal degree in the subject has been a major contention

among scholars from different regions. For instance, Hardy and Corrall (2007) gave an example of British universities where subject librarians do not have a degree in the subject which they are assigned. Meanwhile, in the African context, Chanetsa and Ngulube (2016: 155) show that African academic libraries employ:

a) 'Subject specialists', who are required to hold a first degree in the relevant subject, backed up by a postgraduate LIS qualification; or
b) 'Subject librarians' who have LIS degrees and are expected to develop a wide knowledge of the literature in their designated subject areas.

The academic librarians who took part in the study fell under the second category of subject librarianship though they varied their nomenclature to include Assistant Librarians and Faculty Librarians as the titles of their positions. The study established that the selected academic librarians utilised general subject knowledge more often, rather than the knowledge they gained from a subject through formal qualifications. This was attributed to the difficulty that academic librarians faced in enrolling for specific subject programmes due to the entry qualifications.

6.4.2 Positive perceptions of faculty status

Academic librarians in the study felt that the negative perceptions that they used to receive in their communities are now fewer since the formalisation of the ILS course and its extensive marketing efforts (Section 5.5.3). The participants saw this realisation that lecturers and students were appreciative of the knowledge among academic librarians and their participation in the classroom. In the literature, Montiel-Overall (2005) and Sharan (2010) have defined the ILS model in the study, as the "cooperative teaching model", borrowed from the field of school librarianship, where the teacher and the librarian work together for mutual benefit but they do not necessarily have to be involved in thinking, planning, teaching and evaluating together. One academic librarian in the survey observed that *"academic librarians are well respected as most lecturers refer their students to the library for research and referencing purposes."* There was a common theme among the participants in the study that lecturers would identify learning needs of

their students in class and then request the academic librarians to train students in the specific area (see Figure 5.8).

Moreover, academic librarians in this study, following the cooperative model might have perceived that their teaching was equal with lecturers. However, Loesch (2010: 32) argues that librarians find contact with faculty to be role defining, but for faculty, however, librarian-faculty relations are of little or no concern. Even though most academic librarians have claimed they have gained a positive image from their communities due to their lead in teaching ILS and LTAs, they reported some incidents where students and faculty acted stereotypically towards them (see Section 5.5.2). The academic librarians probably attributed these stereotypes to the traditional image of academic librarians as non-academic staff and the failure to gain recognition through the cooperative model. For instance, an Assistant Librarian who was dissatisfied with the cooperative model highlighted that:

> ***PHSBL72:*** *"For example, in our institution, we have created a model where we teach ILS as a course. We can term this a quasi-faculty status, where we are not academics, but we are recognised as facilitators. That makes our community to appreciate us. However, we would want more in terms of support as we are not given the same recognition as lecturers. We need the support for us to be taken seriously."*

The study also considered the means for academic librarians to receive the same recognition as lecturers, and questioned the participants about faculty status. 94% thought that faculty status (see Section 5.5.3) would lead to the stimulation of confidence among academic librarians, place the ILS course into the university timetable, provide monetary benefits for teaching ILS, support from university administration, recognition of academic librarian's knowledge and research skills; and, a change of negative stereotypes of academic librarians (see Section 5.5.3). A content analysis of the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016) guidelines showed that faculty status is advocated through the participation in university governance. Item 2.2 of the guidelines state that the *"library personnel shall participate in critical decision-making committees*" such as *"Senate, Academic Board, Budget, Planning Committee, Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee are good examples"* (Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium,

2016: 10). Although Item 2.1 of the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016: 10) guidelines is in tandem with standards such as those from the ARCL (Association of College and Research Libraries Committee on the Status of Academic Librarians, 2011a), and present Zimbabwean academic librarians as "non-tenure-track faculty", the guidelines might fall short of some the expectations of academic librarians such as those about expectations for autonomy in teaching roles.

Moreover, Assistant Librarians, where the LIS course was formalised, were paid incentives for teaching, but did not participate in university governance. Instead, the Library Board members, who often did not teach the ILS course participated in university governance (see Section 5.3.2.1). Perhaps faculty status in Zimbabwe might be currently interpreted as participation in university governance and the payment of incentives for teaching. Possibly, the study can take Galbraith, Garrison and Hales' (2015) explanation that the Library Board members might be recognised for their expertise, hence they are the ones who participate fully in university governance. It was also found that Assistant Librarians in this study were also looking for more opportunities to work closely with students and lecturers through faculty liaisons in faculty board meetings (see Section 5.7.2). Faculty board meetings are a gateway for getting into specialised committees such as the university's editorial board, improve communication and raise awareness about library service delivery. The Assistant Librarians may be taken to be seeking participation in university governance by proving themselves to the faculty, instead of deriving their participation directly from the Library Board members.

6.5 Competencies needed to apply blended librarianship in the teaching, learning and the research process

The third research question sought to identify the competencies required by Zimbabwean academic librarians to define their blended roles. The researcher discusses the most significant and common competencies e from the participants, and their application in the teaching, learning and research activities. It was found that pedagogy skills were the most important instructional design competence among academic librarians because they could be used to simplify concepts, improve lesson delivery, design ILS curricula,

identify learning gaps (see Figure 5.14 and Section 5.6.1). The data established that pedagogical skills could be used to develop experiential learning methods in ILS and LTAs that included the students in the teaching, learning and research process (see Figure 5.15). In the same manner, Corrall (2010), Creaser and Spezi (2013), Mugwisi (2015) and Cissé (2016) identified the academic librarian's teaching roles to fall within the teaching and delivery of ILS, thereby causing academic librarians to overlap between academic and non-academic roles. It appears that in the absence of designated persons who are instructional designers in academic libraries as advocated by Bell and Shank (2007), the academic librarians in this study had a bridging role between faculty and students' learning needs. In this case, Bell and Shank (2011) suggest that academic librarians do not need to be experts in instructional design and technology, but must be knowledgeable enough to adapt to any learning situation.

However, some of the participants noted that they had passing knowledge in pedagogy which was not adequate to teach and be recognised as lecturing staff in their universities (see Section 5.5.1). These participants advised that a professional qualification was necessary to teach since the LIS qualification did not prepare its graduate students for the current teaching roles. This finding matches studies from Pasipamire (2012), Chikonzo et al. (2014), Davies-Hoffman et al. (2013), Campbell (2014) and Hoffman and Berg (2014) where it was found that LIS curricula were lagging in imparting pedagogical skills to students. In this regard, Davies-Hoffman et al. (2013) observe that academic librarians are mostly relying on mere knowledge of pedagogy when imparting skills to their communities, and it could possibly pose a challenge to impart skills.

Although, the academic librarians saw the professional teaching qualifications as a requirement, there was no consensus on the level of the teaching qualification, as the interviewees in Section 5.6.1 cite two different levels of qualification. The lack of consensus on the teaching qualifications can be seen in that a Library Board member from LSU Library cited a Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Education as the prerequisite. The literature also did not produce a definite teaching qualification for academic librarians (Corrall, 2010: 568), with researchers such as Raju (2017: 264)

stating that job adverts of academic librarians now required a teaching or training qualification, Mckinney and Wheeler (2015: 114) propose a post-graduate certificate in education and for LIS schools to include teaching courses, while Marten (2008) recommends that a MSc in LIS is adequate to engage in teaching. Albeit, each university in this study offering professional educational qualifications, none of the participants had enrolled for a teaching qualification. Rather, all the interviewees said they had attended a training workshop four years ago which was focused on the development of pedagogical skills. However, with the dynamic environment in universities, the knowledge that was gained through the training workshop may need updating for the academic librarians to deliver quality services.

6.5.1 IBSPTI competencies in instructional design

The IBSPTI® competence that has been ranked highly by the academic librarians is *"Communicating effectively in visual, oral and written form"* (see Figure 5.13) because the tutorials are delivered through face-to-face interactions (Table 5.3, Table 5.4 and Section 6.3.1). Communicating effectively in visual, oral and written form, falls under the essential professional foundation category on the IBSPTI® competencies. Sims and Koszalka (2008: 572) have established that IBSPTI® competence is the "first competency identified and considered essential for the instructional designer" because it enables the academic librarian to interact with the community within and outside the library walls. In addition, Richey, Fields, and Foxon (2001: 45) add that the communicating effectively in visual, oral and written form statement can be broken down into nine (9) component performance areas which are:

a) Create messages that accommodate learner needs and characteristics, content, and objectives;
b) Write and edit text to produce messages that are clear, concise, and grammatically correct;
c) Apply principles of message design to page layout and screen design;
d) Create or select visuals that instruct, orient, or motivate;
e) Deliver presentations that effectively engage and communicate;
f) Use active listening skills in all situations;

g) Present and receive information in a manner that is appropriate for the norms and tasks of the group or team;
h) Seek and share information and ideas among individuals with diverse backgrounds and roles; and,
i) Facilitate meetings effectively.

It is possible that the academic librarians ranked this IBSPTI® competence highly because they teach ILS and LTAs mostly through in-class presentations, demonstrations, orientation and subject guides as very few academic libraries had functional eLMS (see Section 5.3.2). All these tasks may embody the components in the performance statements identified by Richey, Fields, and Foxon (2001: 45). In the interview, when asked which competencies led to the effective integration of teaching, learning and research, some of the respondents indicated information technology competencies. This might indicate that there is a blurred line between instructional technology competencies and instructional design competencies as seen in the literature of the IBSPTI® competencies (Richey, Fields and Foxon, 2001; Sims and Koszalka, 2008; Koszalka, Russ-Eft and Reiser, 2013). Bell and Shank's (2007: 47) observation was that academic librarians who have good pedagogy skills offer a myriad of instructional methods which may include information technology where necessary. Some of the Assistant Librarians also noted that they used Google Forms to capture research profiles, creating alerts through database providers, and using social media to guide students on how to access resources.

However, academic librarians are not at the same level when it comes to competencies that relate to eResources, LTAs, and the development of subject guides (see Section 5.3). There are some academic librarians who have achieved a high degree of mastery in instructional design and instruction technologist competencies due to their background before joining the academic library, work roles, on-the-job-training or personal interest. For instance, the Systems Librarians and some of the Assistant Librarians who had a prior background in IT related professions were more adept at instructional technologist skills roles; while academic librarians who were skilled in instructional design had gone through a workshop in pedagogy, had prior work experience in teaching or had developed their

skills through experience (see Section 5.6.1). Summarily, Bryan (2016) found that academic librarians' prior work experiences provided a significant advantage in their instructional design roles and this may explain why academic librarians who were former teachers could adapt easily into teaching roles.

The lack of skills among academic librarians was ascribed, in some universities, to the role the IT department took in teaching basic computer literacy skills and designing learning management systems, as well as the lack of resources for training library personnel.

6.5.2 Blended librarianship competencies were gained mainly through ZULC workshops

The data suggest that workshops organised by ZULC were the main source of training because they "brought in new developments in LIS" and were conducted by "expert facilitators from North America and Europe" (see Section 5.6.3). ZULC also organised conferences around thematic areas where academic librarians could share experiences. The ZULC workshops were preferred because they saved time, kept up-to-date with the current trends in the academic library, and libraries lacked funds to send staff for training. The literature established that ZULC has partnered with various international organisations to bring training into academic libraries, for example, eIFL.net (Electronic Information for Libraries) and INASP (International Network for the availability of Scientific Publications Programme) (Chanakira and Madziwo, 2013; Mavodza, 2014). Furthermore, internal workshops could be used to train academic librarians who did not attend a conference or external workshops. Those who had not attended would rely on the attendee's reports or presentation of attendees during the in-house training workshops.

Academic librarians were also engaged in personal research that included reading literature in pertaining to issues in their workplace, watching how-to-do-it training on YouTube and experimenting on the skills learnt (see Section 5.6.3). Additionally, peer-to-peer training or informal mentorship was viewed with significance among academic librarians especially those with low budgets for training to develop skills (see Section 5.6.3). Most of the training methods listed above might have been preferred because they

did not require the academic library to pay for the training, and library staff did not have to leave the workplace. A commentary from Pollack and Brown (1998) suggests that informal learning at the workplace has the advantages that it suits the learning style of the academic librarian and encourages the sharing of resources through peer support.

The study findings are also consistent with Chikonzo et al.(2014) who also showed that when academic librarians are novices in a skill, they generally prefer informal mentorship to formal mentorship to gain experience of the job, because of its flexibility in building strong relationships. The rationale for selecting the training methods found in the study are also in tandem with those found by Pasipamire (2015), that workshops and informal engagements were relied on for training because Zimbabwean institutions lacked funding.

6.5.3 Professional development expectations

In the theory of LPP, Lave and Wenger (1991: 93) posit that when people (academic librarians) have clear-cut goals in their professions, they "develop a view of what the whole enterprise is about, and what there is to be learnt" and start to "create opportunities for engagement in practice". The personalised future goals of an academic librarian within the workplace are a signal about the opportunities that they seek to obtain. When the academic librarians in the study were asked about their personal future goals, it was found that most academic librarians perceived that they would develop professionally within the academic library by upgrading their qualifications, taking more job responsibilities and garnering for higher positions within the library (see Section 5.7.3). One of the academic librarians who expected to obtain a higher position said: *"I will be somewhere up there in the management, my vision in the next 5 years is to be among the top management in any academic library".* The researcher deduced that these positive professional development expectations from the participants could be linked to the positive attitude towards the on-going training from ZULC and internal training workshops (see Section 5.6.3).

Researchers such as Havener and Stolt (1994) have revealed that academic librarians who receive institutional support for training are more active in their work roles. They also add that apart from institutional support, academic librarians can get their motivation to

perform based on personal goals. The academic librarians in this study had become blended librarians through both institutional support and personal goals. However, there were cases from the data whereby personal goals had moved at a faster rate than the institutional support, and the academic librarian was often disappointed when some personal goals were not met.

Furthermore, Chabaya (2015) and Pasipamire (2015) have observed that Zimbabwean universities do not have supportive staff development policies and this may hinder academic librarians from getting situated opportunities in their workplaces. Perhaps, restrictive staff development policies can allude to the failure of academic libraries to obtain and implement what Lave and Wenger (1991: 97) call a “learning curriculum” which consists of “situated opportunities” or goals for the academic librarians to develop within the work environment. Although personal research, mentorship and workshops are ideal to learn new competencies, McGuinness (2011: 26) propose that academic librarians should use graduate education because it can acquire a “basic grounding in the theories and methods of teaching”, that fit well into the teaching and instructional design (see Section 5.6.2). The researcher has presumed that academic librarians might not be enrolled in the teaching degrees and subject qualifications in their universities due to these restrictive staff development policies, whereby the university executives may not see the need for academic librarians (as non-academic staff) to be equipped with the skills.

There were few academic librarians who do not see their future in the academic library (two [2] out of three [3] of the statements with low scores). These academic librarians stated that they had their career goals set on other departments in the university or institutions which were outside university life (see Section 5.7.3). The literature established that issues such as recognition by peers and members of the university community were pertinent for academic librarians to remain committed to discourses such as blended librarianship (Feldman and Sciammarella, 2000; Wyss, 2010; Hosburgh, 2011; Nilsen, 2012; Galbraith, Garrison and Hales, 2015). Arguments regarding the faculty status of academic librarians are quite prominent for academic librarians to be

satisfied with their work roles (Major, 1993; Koenig, Morrison and Roberts, 1996; Raber and Connaway, 1996; Feldman and Sciammarella, 2000; Hosburgh, 2011).

The data collected in this study also pointed out that academic librarians who wanted to leave academic librarianship wanted to become lecturers and be regarded as faculty members (see Section 5.7.3). Similarly, studies such as Hart (2010) and Mugwisi and Hikwa (2015) state that academic librarians feel dissatisfied when they are not recognised by their peers and community, and this may lead to staff turnover (Koenig, Morrison and Roberts, 1996; Nyamubarwa, 2013). It has also been reported by Tumbleson and Burke (2009) that where library staffing is problematic, it impedes the sustainability of services of blended librarianship. The data showed that academic librarians were also overburdened with duties due to severe budget cuts, and this possibly could have led the some of the academic librarians in the study to have feelings of leaving the profession.

6.6 Academic librarians are applying technology in their traditional roles

The study found (see Section 5.7) that LTAs in the environment around the academic library have given rise to distance learning and other non-face-to face learning, resulting in the university community relying more on smart devices (that is, cell phones, tablets and laptops).

Academic librarians have seen a reduction in the number of students and lecturers who come to the library as the community members prefer to work from outside the library, accessing Wi-Fi rather than visiting the library (see Figure 5.20 and 5.21). Hence, the academic librarians acquired both the instructional technologist and instructional design skills for reaching out to the community outside the library walls, for example, through the eResources, subject guides, re-designing library spaces and communicating with their communities in the spaces where they work, for example through social media.

Additionally, the study confirmed the findings of Chikonzo et al. (2014), who reported that the spread of technology in the academic library has touched on all facets of the library

work, and resulted in academic librarians upgrading their skills to match the demands of their roles. In the theory of LPP, Lave and Wenger (2002: 117) submit that:

> Participation involving technology is especially significant because the artifacts used within a cultural practice carry a substantial portion of that practice's heritage. Thus, understanding the technology of practice is more than learning to use tools; it is a way to connect with the history of the practice and to participate more directly in its cultural life.

The researcher has found that technology has been utilised by the academic librarians to fulfill traditional tasks of academic librarianship in the teaching, learning and research processes, thus becoming blended librarians. The data established that academic librarians in the study had not abandoned their traditional roles which define them in the university, but technology made these tasks faster and easier to reach out to a higher audience (see Section 5.7). Bell and Shank (2011) and Vargas et al. (2015) call academic librarians who are relying on technology to change the methods, "disruptive technological innovators". Similarly, Raju (2017) in a recent paper argued that the disruptive technological innovator model has led to an increase in the teaching responsibilities of academic librarians working in the digital age. Perhaps, it can be speculated that the academic librarians selected to participate in the study are disruptive innovators at their universities because they are introducing their communities to lifelong learning through teaching ILS and LTAs.

An alternative way of looking at the data presented by the academic librarians in this study is to consider Al-Fadhli, Corrall and Cox's (2016) study which found that technology adoption in the academic libraries could influence a quest for prestige among academic librarians, and faith in technology as a solution to problems. Some of the academic librarians saw technology and learning commons as a solution to their community's changing information behaviour, but they may not realise that technologies could lead to low library usage statistics especially for the walk-in patrons.

There are precautions taken by Bell and Shank (2011) to solve the above challenges noted Al-Fadhli, Corrall and Cox (2016: 10), such as advising academic librarians that technology may not always be the solution to some of the problems faced by faculty and

students. It was suggested by Bell and Shank (2007) that the steps in ADDIE should be followed so that academic librarians use logical steps to solve the challenges instead of mere intuition to avoid technolust. However, the data from the study so far, have pointed out that the Zimbabwean academic librarians are finding it difficult to follow the steps in ADDIE, leading to an over reliance on the academic librarian's choice of what may work for their communities.

6.6.1 Academic librarians see the future in IT related roles

The participants in the study foresee the academic library having a future in information technology related goals, such as the hybrid library (both paper and eResources combined), an increased use in eResources (leading to lower physical library visits), an increased use of mobile technologies, video chat/conference facilities for circulation and more spaces to accommodate Internet access and personal research (see Section 5.7.3). The literature posited that institutional work of the academic librarians "no longer swirls around the reference desk nor the library website", but in the spaces where students conduct learning", typically the eLMS (Tumbleson and Burke, 2009). Hence, studies such as Jain (2013: 145) have stated that the future of the 21st century academic librarians should be in blended librarianship. However, some respondents felt that Zimbabwean's economic situation made it difficult to purchase equipment and recruit additional staff to support the eLMS (see Sections 5.5.4 and 5.5.3.1). The consensus among the Library Board members was that their academic librarians were overburdened with many duties to mitigate the challenges caused by the economic situation. Hence, it can be speculated that if the academic libraries are given adequate resources, the academic librarians would be able to realise the future they have predicted.

6.7 Chapter summary

The chapter discussed and explained the structural descriptions of academic librarians who have established blended librarianship in Zimbabwe, taking into consideration the attitudes and perceptions, competencies and significant events that have led to blended librarianship. The literature surrounding blended librarianship and the theoretical framework of LPP were used to bring into perspective the how and why behind the

discussion of the findings. This discussion was also balanced by offering alternative arguments so that the results of the study can be transferable in different contexts, especially the academic librarians and institutions that did not take part in the study. The next chapter draws conclusions from the study using the research questions, the discussion of the literature, theoretical framework, together with the findings to establish the general essence of the study. The following chapter (Chapter 7) summarises the study, draws conclusions based on the data collected and analysed and then makes recommendations that influence practice, policy and future studies.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction and overview

The primary objective of the study was to explore the shared experiences of blended librarianship to find out how effectively Zimbabwean academic librarians adhere to their dynamic roles and functions, and their perceptions of how they are perceived. Preliminary research had found that Zimbabwean academic librarians are now combining both academic and professional roles, however, there was evidence that suggested that academic librarians had been ineffective in combining both academic and professional roles and seemed to be concentrating more of their efforts on traditional professional roles. The study sought to find out how effectively academic librarians adhere to their dynamic roles and functions, and how they are perceived in the university. The researcher used Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of LPP to frame this study.

The conclusions from this study follow the research questions and the findings and therefore address four areas:

7.1.1 Blended librarianship has been adopted through ILS tutorials, training in information retrieval, basic computer literacy and LTAs; four (4) different categories that highlight each institution's academic librarians' level of instructional technologist and instructional design roles emerged from the data;

7.1.2 Although the negative perception towards academic librarians is shifting, academic librarians still face identity dilemmas in their teaching roles;

7.1.3 Academic librarians require pedagogical skills to apply ILS and LTAs in the teaching, learning and research process; and,

7.1.4 Disruptive innovation has significantly impacted the traditional roles of academic librarians.

Following is a discussion of the major structural descriptions and conclusions based on this research. This discussion is the researchers' recommendations and a final reflection on this study.

7.2 Academic librarians are still operating at the periphery of faculty and students

The first general theme of this study (7.1.1), recognised that blended librarianship had been adopted through the teaching of ILS and LTAs. A conclusion to be drawn from this general theme is that academic librarians liaise with faculty and students to teach ILS and LTAs because most academic libraries do not have enough supportive resources (such as classrooms and eLMS) and autonomy to teach in the classroom. The adoption of blended librarianship requires academic librarians to first operate within the periphery of faculty and students, and then subsequently earn their support (after completing a relevant degree for teaching, subject expertise or creating valuable liaisons) so that it can be fully realised. Although there are some academic libraries that have credit-bearing ILS courses, it does not guarantee them cooperation from the faculty and students, due to the traditional subservient role of the academic library. It can be concluded that the academic librarians are still operating at the periphery of faculty, hoping that if they attract faculty, students will follow along, and this may be the reason why they have not fully implemented blended librarianship.

A related conclusion is that academic librarians who participated in the study worked in institutions that are in transition to become "fully blended librarians" as suggested by (Held, 2010). As they increase their presence in instructional design and or instructional technologist roles, they might go into the next phase of the transitions, but it may be fraught with its unique set of problems.

7.3 The identity dilemmas of the academic librarians in the study

Academic librarians were facing identity dilemmas (see 7.1.2), where they claimed they were receiving a positive response in the university communities for their teaching role has, but there were not yet formally recognised as academic staff. Academic librarians believed that their participation in teaching ILS and demonstrating LTAs to both faculty

and students warrants them to be regarded as academic staff, however lecturing staff and students do not regard them as such. This is because academic librarians have admitted that they often lack subject expertise and teaching skills. A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that academic librarians have become deviant-either-way, by participating in the teaching, learning and research at the peripheral levels (through cooperative teaching, without integrating into lecturer's courses) and teaching ILS training and LTAs (often within the spaces of the library, such as the learning commons).

7.4 Pedagogy and the ability to apply IT skills are needed to be legitimised as fully blended librarians

Blended librarians in Zimbabwe need pedagogical skills and basic computer literacy when delivering teaching, learning and research services to their communities (7.1.3). The academic librarians in the study saw the need for additional qualifications (in their faculty's subject and teaching mostly) to be effective at blended librarianship, match lecturing staffs' competencies and legitimately participate in the teaching, learning and research process.

It may also be concluded that basic computer literacy skills were a necessity because they were an entry point to using LTAs and because academic librarians were also engaged in teaching their communities basic computing skills to use on computers and smart devices.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the study is that the lack of a learning curriculum and training resources in academic libraries, has made them to rely on personal research, ZULC training workshops and peer-to-peer training to gain competencies that they lack.

7.5 Blended librarianship has arisen from ILS education and the application of disruptive technologies in library services

A conclusion to drawn from the last theme, 7.1.4, is that academic librarians are relying on disruptive technologies to conduct their work roles. Technology has not changed the roles of Zimbabwean academic librarians; it has created easier and faster ways of doing

traditional responsibilities. Throughout the interviews, the academic librarians felt that the application of technology in the teaching, learning and research process had led to blended librarianship. They mentioned how technology was embedded into eResources and LTAs training. Technologies were used for reaching out to communities beyond the library walls in the teaching, learning and research process. A similar conclusion is that the emphasis on teaching ILS, whether as a course or through one-shot instruction was regarded as significant by the academic librarians, as they spent a great amount of time planning and delivering services with an ILS component.

Finally, the Zimbabwe University Libraries Consortium (2016) guidelines had a far-reaching value in the practice of the academic librarians as they set targets that academic libraries ought to achieve. Throughout the study, the academic librarians referred to some of the components in the ZULC guidelines, and their practice was in most cases consistent with the guidelines, though some variations occurred due to organisational culture and the resources available in each institution.

7.6 Bridging the theory-practice divide using blended librarianship

Though blended librarianship had been adopted in different academic libraries through various ways that account for the socio-cultural and historical issues in each academic library, it can be concluded that blended librarianship may bridge the theory-practice divide. The academic librarians in the study were crossing lines between academic and non-academic roles, integrating learning theories into their practical work and what they had learnt during their years at the LIS school with what they learnt at work. LPP is a useful lens to observe how the theory-practice divide is bridged, as it sets a differentiation between the teaching curriculum and the learning curriculum and emphasises the movement to different levels of mastery.

7.7 Recommendations

The researcher generated recommendations for academic librarians, universities and further research, which are discussed in this section.

7.7.1 Recommendations for the academic librarians

a) For blended librarianship to be effective, academic librarians must move beyond the current mode of cooperative teaching ILS with departments such as Communication Skills and Information Technology. Monge and Frisicaro-Pawlowski (2014: 60) have criticised the cooperative model stating that it is college-centric and often fails to account for the social and contextual learning occurring in the workplace. Therefore, academic librarians should work on implementing integrated teaching which embeds the librarian into courses taught by their faculty. This would mean that the academic librarians would have to be fully involved in the development of the faculty's courses from the on-set, planning the teaching methods and resources that are available for teaching. This model has been suggested in the field of school librarianship and has been touted to lead to a deeper level of involvement and commitment from both the librarian and teachers and also a deeper level of trust (Montiel-Overall, 2005: 37).

b) Ultimately, the challenges in transferring approaches to information literacy from the academic librarians to workplace settings revolve around issues of context. Because the current approach to ILS instruction is college-centric, it often fails to account for the social and contextual learning occurring in the workplace. As such, the faculty and librarians need to understand the limitations of traditional ILS instruction and consider how both informal and social learning occurring in the workplace can be incorporated into existing IL standards and practices. In doing so, faculty members and librarians can collaborate and create ILS guidelines that are discipline specific, that consider both formal and informal learning styles, and that is ultimately more reflective of the professions and workplaces their students will be entering. Such collaborations also provide the faculty and librarians an opportunity to design ILS assign.

c) Academic librarians should upgrade their qualifications and skills to gain a high degree of expertise, which they can use to bargain for autonomy to teach ILS and LTAs in the classroom.

d) Eventually, academic librarians must consider running a department that is solely dedicated on teaching ILS and LTAs and research support. In this model, the

academic librarians can be able to teach ILS as academics and be relieved of some duties in the library which interfere with their effectiveness. However, this model has staff implications as more librarians are needed to make this model work.

e) Academic librarians ought to work in their faculties, especially if they are to fulfil faculty liaisons. Working at the main library takes the academic librarian away from their community, making it ineffective to build lasting relationships. Faculty liaisons need constant communication and involvement of the academic librarians, and this can be achieved better if the academic librarian works at the point of the need, the faculty.

7.7.2 Recommendations for universities

a) Universities that have not yet implemented the ILS course, should consider the far-reaching gains of lifelong learning. These universities should support their academic libraries through policies that create a conducive environment for academic librarians to teach ILS. The same can be said about the universities that are already teaching the ILS course, they also need supportive policies and resources to be effective. For example, formalising the ILS timetable, providing teaching space and specialised equipment and technology where necessary.

b) Higher education institutions that train academic librarians should revise their curricula and offer courses that include instructional design and instructional technology. Students should be taught how to design courses with specialised software, how to use both asynchronous and synchronous methods before they graduate and work in the academic library.

c) Higher education institutions may consider ways of implanting a learning curriculum for academic librarians into the current training programmes. This learning curriculum must be in sync with the developments that are taking place in academic libraries and the world over. ZULC may be used as a platform to bring into the workplace, professional development courses for new and practising academic librarians. However, due to the low budgets for training, other methods

such as eLearning and webinars need to be explored so that participants are kept up-to-date.

7.7.3 Recommendations for further research

a) While this study has explored the essence of blended librarianship from the perspective of the academic librarian, it would also be of benefit to know the user/community experiences regarding academic librarians' blended roles. Future research may explore whether user communities are aware of academic librarian's blended roles, and their perceptions or experiences of the blended roles meeting their needs.
b) There was a gap in the study, where academic librarians were not engaged in systems development and eLearning management systems. Further research may include systems developers or instructional technologists responsible for university eLMS, and attempt to build a collaborative network where they can work together with academic librarians, lecturers and students.
c) Further research may also investigate how blended librarianship occurs in polytechnic colleges and teacher training colleges in Zimbabwe. These are a unique environment that significantly differs from the university in terms of resources, socio-demographics and organisational culture. This may increase the trustworthiness of findings of this study.
d) The *"Institutions in transition to become blended librarians"* model (see Section 5.4) that was developed in this study needs further refinement. Further studies may use the model within the same settings or different settings altogether so that the results can bring results which may closely fit into the model or to test if the results are replicable.

7.8. Evaluation of the research methodology used in the study

The study's methodology was framed through the interpretivism paradigm, thereby enabling the researcher to collect thick and rich narratives of the academic librarian's experiences and their interpretation of the events that occur around them. The study's

primary objective accepted that the academic librarian's experiences and interpretations of blended librarianship could differ from one person to the next, and the study sought to reduce several interpretations into one common meaning. Therefore, the study's methodology espoused the phenomenological research tradition and collected data from six (6) purposively selected state-run university libraries in Zimbabwe to explore academic librarians' experiences towards blended librarianship. The study went on to use interpretive phenomenological analysis where the researcher had to ask the academic librarians in each research site to share their experiences of blended librarianship, then the researcher would make sense of the academic librarian's interpretations then reduce to one common meaning.

The researcher is content with the use of interpretivism in the phenomenological tradition applied in the study because it enabled the researcher to sift through the thick and rich descriptions from the experiences of the academic librarians to answer the primary objective. Interpretivism was also useful in reconciling the study's findings with the theory of Legitimate Peripheral Participation that was used to frame the research questions and the literature reviewed. Hence, interpretivism ensured that the conclusions in this study are trustworthy and transferable because they are consistent with existing literature and theory.

7.9 Chapter summary and conclusions

This chapter discussed the major structural descriptions of the shared experiences of blended librarianship among Zimbabwean academic librarians, using the literature and the theoretical framework. The researcher drew conclusions or essence of the study based on the discussion in this chapter and recommendations were suggested for or academic librarians, universities and further research.

The conclusions that were drawn from this study may be used in understanding how blended librarianship is practice across the academic libraries in Zimbabwe. The model that was derived from the study's findings and related literature, the "Institutions in

transition to become blended librarians" may be used to understand the different stages that academic libraries go through to become fully blended librarians and participate legitimately in the teaching, learning and research process. The existing literature on blended librarianship has not considered that there are stages that need to be passed by academic librarians or libraries to effectively become blended librarians, especially in developing countries such as Zimbabwe. Hence, the conclusions and recommendations of the study may be used in further studies or to advance the literature in blended librarianship.

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Harare: University of Zimbabwe Library.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics clearance letter from UCT

Library and Information Studies Centre
University of Cape Town
Upper Campus

Private Bag X1, RONDEBOSCH, 7701 South Africa
Level 6 Hlanganani, The Chancellor Oppenheimer Library
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 4546
E-mail: lisc@uct.ac.za
Internet: www.lisc.uct.ac.za

UCTLIS2017 06-03 05 June 2017

Israel Mbekezeli Dabengwa
Library and Information Studies Centre
University of Cape Town

Dear Mr Israel Dabengwa

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been granted by the Ethics Review Committee of the Library and Information Studies Centre, Faculty of Humanities on behalf of the University of Cape Town for your Master's project entitled: *A phenomenological study of experiences in blended librarianship among academic librarians in Zimbabwe with special reference to selected higher education institutions.*

I wish you the very best with your study.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Connie Bitso
Chair - LISC Research Ethics Committee.

Appendix 2: Ethics clearance letter from the Ministry of Higher Tertiary Education, Zimbabwe

All official communications should be addressed to:
"The Secretary for Higher & Tertiary Education
Telephones: 795891-5, 796441-9, 730055-9
Fax Numbers: 792109, 728730, 703957
E-mail: thesecretary@mhet.ac.zw
Telegraphic address: "EDUCATION"

ZIMBABWE

Reference: G/11/13

MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY
EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT
P. BAG CY 7732
CAUSEWAY

Our Ref.: E/7/6

8 September 2017

Mr. Israel Mbekezeli Dabengwa
Assistant Librarian
Faculty of Medicine
National University of Science and Technology
Bulawayo

RE: RESEARCH ON "A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF EXPERIENCES IN BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP AMONG ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS IN ZIMBABWE WITH REFERENCE TO SELECTED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS": MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

Reference is made to your, letter in which you requested for permission to carry out a research on **"A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF EXPERIENCES IN BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP AMONG ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS IN ZIMBABWE WITH REFERENCE TO SELECTED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS".**

Accordingly, please be advised that the Head of Ministry has granted permission for you to carry out the research in this Ministry's Institutions only.

It is hoped that your research will benefit the Ministry and it would be appreciated if you could supply the office of the Permanent Secretary with a final copy of your study, as the findings would be relevant to the Ministry's strategic planning process.

Mavhondo P. (Mr.)
Acting Director – Human Resources
For: PERMANENT SECRETARY
/sm

Appendix 3: Ethics clearance letter from Solusi University

Solusi University, P.O. Solusi, Bulawayo

10 July 2017

Mr. Israel Mbekezeli Dabengwa

National University of Science and Technology

Faculty of Medicine, Mpilo Hospital,

Vera Road, Mzilikazi,

Bulawayo

REF: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A PILOT STUDY AT SOLUSI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Your request to carry out a pilot study at Solusi University Library is granted and you are expected to collect your data within the month of July 2017 as per your request and the following condition is supposed to be adhered to;

a) The information you are going to collect from our library will be used for academic purposes only.

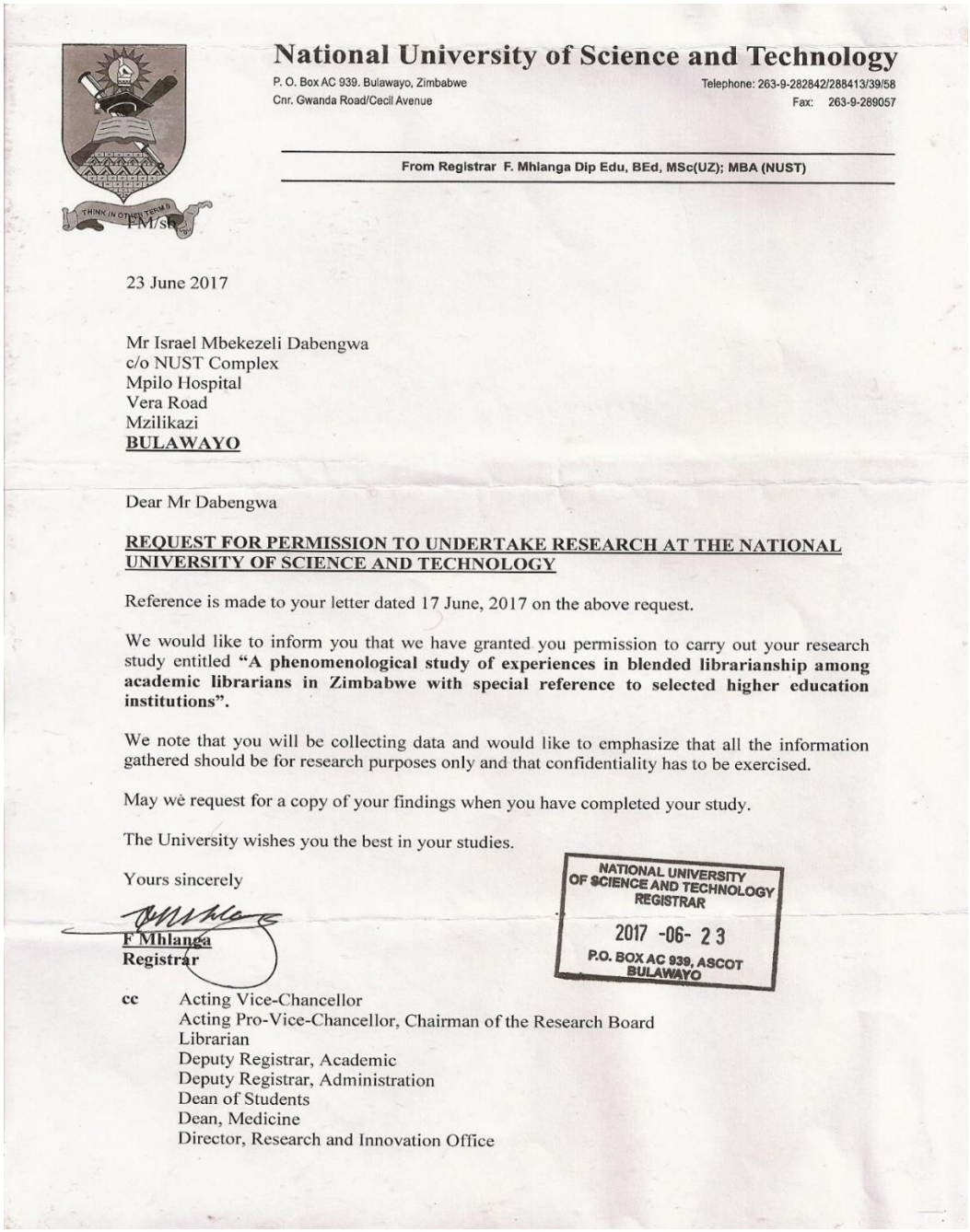
We wish you all the best in your studies.

Sincerely,

ROSEMARY MATURURE

LIBRARIAN

Appendix 4: Ethics clearance letter from the National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe



National University of Science and Technology

P. O. Box AC 939. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
Cnr. Gwanda Road/Cecil Avenue

Telephone: 263-9-282842/288413/39/58
Fax: 263-9-289057

From Registrar F. Mhlanga Dip Edu, BEd, MSc(UZ); MBA (NUST)

THINK IN OTHER TERMS

FM/sb

23 June 2017

Mr Israel Mbekezeli Dabengwa
c/o NUST Complex
Mpilo Hospital
Vera Road
Mzilikazi
BULAWAYO

Dear Mr Dabengwa

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Reference is made to your letter dated 17 June, 2017 on the above request.

We would like to inform you that we have granted you permission to carry out your research study entitled **"A phenomenological study of experiences in blended librarianship among academic librarians in Zimbabwe with special reference to selected higher education institutions".**

We note that you will be collecting data and would like to emphasize that all the information gathered should be for research purposes only and that confidentiality has to be exercised.

May we request for a copy of your findings when you have completed your study.

The University wishes you the best in your studies.

Yours sincerely

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REGISTRAR
2017 -06- 23
P.O. BOX AC 939, ASCOT BULAWAYO

F Mhlanga
Registrar

cc Acting Vice-Chancellor
Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Chairman of the Research Board
Librarian
Deputy Registrar, Academic
Deputy Registrar, Administration
Dean of Students
Dean, Medicine
Director, Research and Innovation Office

Appendix 5: Ethics clearance letter from the Lupane State University, Zimbabwe

Lupane State University

Building Communities through Knowledge

Lupane State University Campus
1st Floor Faculty of Agricultural Sciences Building
LUPANE
Postal Address: P O BOX 170
LUPANE
Tel: +263-0389-261, 269, 488, 571
Email: jmakunde@lsu.ac.zw

REGISTRAR'S OFFICE

4 August 2017

University of Cape Town
Private BagX1, RONDEBOSCH, 7701
SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Mr Israel M Dabengwa

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH

The above subject refers.

This letter serves to grant you permission to undertake a research on the **"A phenomenological study of experiences in blended librarianship among academic librarians in Zimbabwe with special reference to selected higher education institutions"** in our university as requested.

Thank you

J Makunde
REGISTRAR
cc SAR – Human Resources
Running File

Appendix 6: Ethics clearance letter from the Midlands State University, Zimbabwe

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
NUST Complex,
Mpilo Hospital,
Vera Road,
Mzilikazi, Bulawayo
P. O. Box AC 939
Ascot, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
Telephone: 263-9-283337-9
Fax: 263-9-283309
FACULTY OF MEDICINE

19 July 2017

The Registrar
Midlands State University (MSU)
P Bag 9055
Gweru

RE: PERMISSION TO GET ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP AT MSU LIBRARY

My name is Israel Mbekezeli Dabengwa and I am an MPhil (Research) student in the Library and Information Studies Centre at the University of Cape Town. I am currently conducting a research study on the title "A phenomenological study of experiences in blended librarianship among academic librarians in Zimbabwe with special reference to selected higher education institutions". I would like to carry out a research at MSU Library as from Monday, 24 July 2017. The target groups for this research are the academic librarians, and library board members.

Please find attached my offer letter to study.

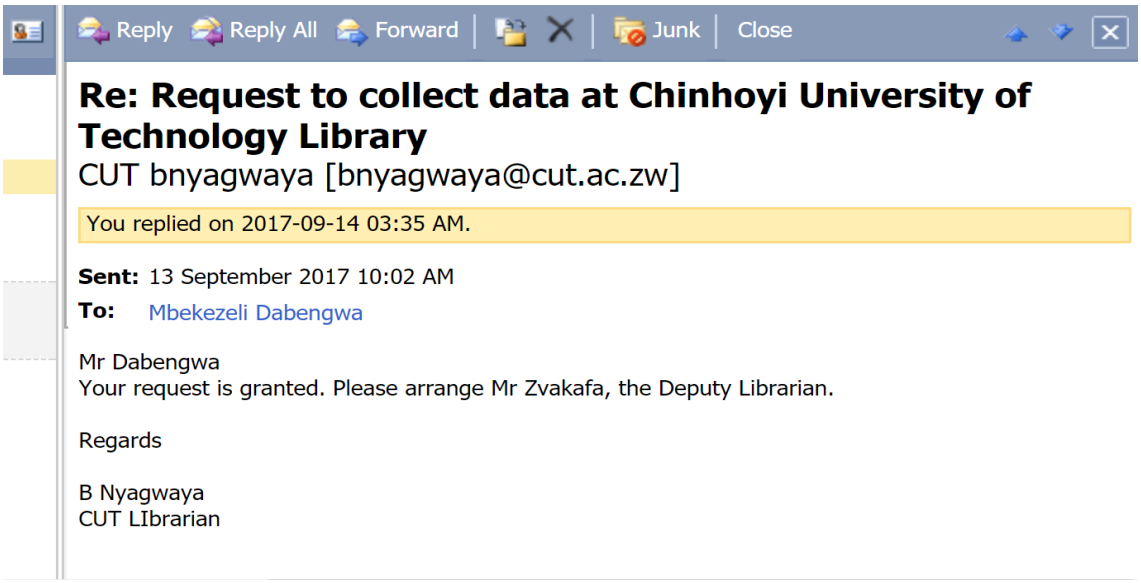
I look forward to a favourable response.

Yours sincerely

Mr. Israel Mbekezeli Dabengwa
Assistant Librarian, Faculty of Medicine
Mobile+263772814423
Email: israel.dabengwa@nust.ac.zw

Contact
Reply this e-mail
informing Mr Dabengwa
that his request
has been approved
as he is still interested.
H
Reg
02/08/17

Appendix 7: Ethics clearance letter from the Chinhoyi University of Technology



Reply | Reply All | Forward | Junk | Close

Re: Request to collect data at Chinhoyi University of Technology Library

CUT bnyagwaya [bnyagwaya@cut.ac.zw]

You replied on 2017-09-14 03:35 AM.

Sent: 13 September 2017 10:02 AM

To: Mbekezeli Dabengwa

Mr Dabengwa
Your request is granted. Please arrange Mr Zvakafa, the Deputy Librarian.

Regards

B Nyagwaya
CUT LIbrarian

Appendix 8: Ethics clearance letter from the Bindura University of Science Education, Zimbabwe

REGISTRY DEPARTMENT

P Bag 1020
BINDURA, Zimbabwe

Tel: 0271 – 7531-6, 7615
Fax: 263 –271 – 7534

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

HUMAN RESOURCES

20 July 2017

Mr Israel Mbekezeli Dabengwa
National University of Science and Technology
Ascot
Bulawayo

Dear Mr I M Dabengwa

RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ATTHE BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION.

Permission to carry out Research on

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF EXPERIENSE IN BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP AMONG ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS IN ZIMBABWE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SELECTED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Bindura University of Science Education has granted you the permission on the following conditions.

a) That in carrying out this research you do not disturb the programmes of the institution.
b) That you avail to the University a copy of your research findings.
c) That the permission can be withdrawn at any time by the Registrar or by any higher officer.

I wish you success in your research work and in your University/College studies.

Yours faithfully

SG Chitera (Mr)
ACTING REGISTRAR

Appendix 9: Semi-structured questionnaire for academic librarians

A phenomenological study of experiences in blended librarianship among academic librarians in Zimbabwe with special reference to selected higher education institutions

My name is Israel Mbekezeli Dabengwa and I am an MPhil (Research) student in the Library and Information Studies Centre at the University of Cape Town. My study is being supervised by Associate Professor J. Raju from the University of Cape Town.

The primary objective of the study was to explore the shared experiences of blended librarianship to find out how effectively Zimbabwean academic librarians adhere to their dynamic roles and functions, and how they are perceived in the university. This information will be used to establish a common pattern on how the practices of academic librarians in Zimbabwe are bridging the theory-practice divide in LIS. By so doing, solutions may be found on how to reduce fragmentation in the LIS profession.

As an academic librarian, I am inviting you to participate in this study by completing this questionnaire. The questionnaire requires narrative accounts to be provided. Your participation is strictly voluntary, and you may withdraw your participation at any time. There is no compensation for responding nor is there any known risk.

To ensure that all information remains anonymous, please do not include your name. Any information that you provide in this study, and that can be identified with you, will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission.

For further information or clarification, you may contact:

Researcher: Israel Mbekezeli Dabengwa

E-mail: israel.dabengwa@nust.ac.zw

Cell: +263772814423

Supervisor: Associate Professor J. Raju

Email: jaya.raju@uct.ac.za

Tel: +27 021 6503091

INSTRUCTIONS: **Please tick in the appropriate box(es) and provide further explanation where necessary.**

KEY FOR THE CATEGORIES USED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time
0	**1**	**2**	**3**
Behaviour does **not** occur	Exhibiting **some** of the characteristics of the behaviour	**Intermittent** periods where the behaviour is practised	The behaviour is **pervasive** and becomes the **primary** task

Section A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1.Select one option in each of the categories

Item	Category	
Age	**20 and below**	
	21-25	
	26-30	
	31-35	
	36-40	
	41-45	
	45 and above	
Number of years in practice in an academic library	**0-5 years**	
	6-10 years	
	11-15	
	16-20 years	

	21-25 years	
	26 years and above	
Academic Institution		
	CUT Library	
	BUSE Library	
	LSU Library	
	MSU Library	
	NUST Library	
Other academic institution (Please specify)		

2 (i.) What is your formal job title?

_____

(ii.) Is Library and Information Science the qualifying degree for the position that you hold?

Yes ☐ No☐

(iii.) If your answer in **2 (ii.)** is **No**, please specify your qualifying degree

_____

3 (i.) Have you held any job prior to joining the academic library?

Yes ☐ No☐

(ii.) If your answer to the Question 3 (i) is **Yes**, please specify your previous job position

_____

_____

_____

(iii.) How has your previous job influenced you in your current job position?

Section B: ESTABLISHING THE ADOPTION OF BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

A **blended librarian** is defined by Bell and Shank (2007: 3) as "an academic librarian who combines the **traditional skill-sets of librarianship** with the **information technologist's hardware/software skills**, and the **instructional or educational designer's** ability to **apply technology appropriately** in the **teaching and learning process**"

4 (i.) Information literacy skills training can be defined as teaching the skills of finding information in a library or similar platforms, and the skills required to critically evaluate information content and use it effectively (Reitz, 2017).

How much time during the past five years or so, have you been engaged in information literacy training. **(Select one option**)

None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time

(ii.) Are the information literacy training activities that you conduct linked to any identified needs in the user communities that you serve?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(iii.) Please provide a reason to this response

(iv.) INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS (ILS) TRAINING

Blended librarianship in information literacy skills training
Please tick where appropriate

Frequency of information literacy skills training	None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time
I plan and facilitate in-class activities for a subject using library resources				
I am responsible for providing eResources for online classes/exercises conducted through Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai, etc.				
I am responsible for online classes/exercises initiated by my library				
I provide simulations and games for lecturers and learners to examine issues and problems that arise in a specific situation				
I conduct one-shot instruction for new students/faculty members				
I teach ILS as a course and I am responsible for grading learners				
I can conduct face-to-face instruction at any time				
I can do just-in-time teaching based on the immediate needs of students during a lesson or work period				

Other, please specify

_____

_____

_____

5 (i.) How much of time during the past five years or so, have you spent teaching user communities how to use any information and communication (ICT) and related technologies? (**Select one option**)

None of the time	Some of the time	Most of the time	All the time

(ii.) Are the technologies that you provide demonstrations for, linked to any courses or classroom activity in your college/university?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If your response to 4 (ii.) is **Yes**, please list some of these technologies

_____

_____

_____

(iii.) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SKILLS TRAINING

Blended librarianship in information technology skills training				
Please tick where appropriate				
Frequency of information technology skills training	**None of the time**	**Some of the time**	**Most of the time**	**All the time**
I plan and facilitate the integration of library resources, for example eResources and databases onto the course management system (Blackboard, Moodle, Sakai, etc.)				
I am responsible for integrating third party commercial information services for example statistical agencies, indexing and abstracting agencies and so forth				
I am responsible for customizing the e-learning environment for storing personally preferred resources (for example, downloaded materials and hyperlinks)				
I provide virtual reference services through email, instant chat or real time				
I am responsible for the provision of training modules needed for effective information service and use				
Consolidating learning-based print and electronic resources into the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)				

I demonstrate technologies through face-to-face instructions at any time				
I identify and analyse emerging technologies and innovations that can be used by my community				
I work with faculty to match the appropriate technologies for teaching, learning and research activities				

Other, please specify

_____

_____

_____

6 (i.) Does your library follow any systematic problem-solving procedures when conducting any training for a subject field (i.e. chemistry, biology, accounting among others)?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(ii.) If your response to Question 6 is **Yes**, please list the steps that you take

_____

_____

_____

_____

7 (i.) ADDIE is a commonly used model for problem solving for learning and teaching in academic libraries. Which of the stages of ADDIE, listed below, are mostly used in your library when conducting training or providing subject expertise?

Process	Description	Yes	No
Analysis	the process of defining what is to be learnt		
Design	the process of specifying how it is to be learnt		
Development	the process of authoring and producing learning materials		

Implementation	the process of installing the instruction product in a real-world context		
Evaluation	the process of determining the impact of the instruction		

(ii.) Is it possible to fully implement all the steps of the ADDIE model in your work roles? Please justify your response?

_____

_____

_____

8. Please tick the appropriate frequency for blended librarianship activities that you perform at your academic library

Blended librarianship activities				
Please tick where appropriate				
Frequency of blended librarianship activities	**None of the time**	**Some of the time**	**Most of the time**	**All the time**
Developing, building, and maintaining good public relations inside and outside the library				
Negotiating for copyright/licenses, collecting, and storing relevant course materials into accessible platforms, for example subject guides or course outlines				
Answering subject related reference questions				
Anticipating what learners and lecturers want from the library				
Delivering services in a way that responds to users' needs in a timely and personalized way and with continuity				
Maintaining a presence in and among the targeted user group				

Learning, understanding, operating, and providing a service within the space of the user				
Collaborating with other units/functions to serve learners/lecturers				

Other, please specify

_____

_____

_____

9 (i.) Please provide any example(s) of activities that you are responsible for, which are outside the scope of your normal job description

_____

_____

_____

_____

(ii.) Why have you taken on the activities that you have stated in Item 9 (i.)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

10 (i.) Do you think subject librarianship (that is, conducting liaison and communication on subjects with faculty and students) is the most effective mode of delivering teaching, learning and research activities to meet the needs of your user community?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(ii.) Please justify your response

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section C: THE INTERPRETIVE REPERTOIRES OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS

11 (i.) How would you rate your performance in delivering teaching, learning and research activities that meet the needs of your user community? (**Select one option**)

Excellent	**Good**	**I could do better**

(ii.) Justify the option you selected in 11 (i.)

_____

_____

12 (i.) What do you see yourself as in terms of blended librarianship? (**Select one option**)

I teach		**I do not teach**	
Teacher-librarian I am a teacher AND I do the same teaching as a lecturer		**Learning support** I am a teacher, BUT my teaching is not the same as that of lecturers	
Librarian who teaches I am not a lecturer, BUT I do some teaching		**Trainer** I am not a lecturer AND I do not teach	

Other, please specify

_____

(ii.) Briefly explain why you have chosen the selected option

13. How are academic librarians perceived by lecturers and students in your college/university?

14 (i.) Do you believe academic librarians would be more effective at delivering teaching in a classroom or in an eLearning environment if they have formal recognition such as faculty status (that is, official recognition by the college/university that librarians are part of the instructional and research staff, as faculty members are)

Yes ☐ No ☐

(ii.) Please justify your response to Question 14 (i)

15 (i.) Do you believe academic librarians can take on roles like those of teaching staff/academics, for example, teaching in a classroom or in an eLearning environment?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(ii.) Please explain your position in 15 (i.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

1**6 (i.)** Please narrate a recent negative situation that discouraged you or any of your colleagues in the library from meeting the teaching, learning and research roles of your job/s

_____

_____

_____

_____

(ii.) What makes you to perceive that the issues narrated in Item 16 (i.) are of concern?

_____

_____

_____

_____

17 (i.) Do you believe that academic librarians would be more successful at delivering teaching, learning and research activities to their user communities when they collaborate with other stakeholders?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(ii.) Please select whom you think academic librarians should collaborate with

Collaborations for academic librarians				
Please tick where appropriate				
Frequency of collaborations for academic librarians	**None of the time**	**Some of the time**	**Most of the time**	**All the time**
Learners from faculties/departments				
Teaching faculty/academics				
Governing bodies of universities e.g. faculty boards, teaching and learning committees				
Practitioners for the related subject/discipline e.g. subject experts, persons from industry, etc.				
Professional associations e.g. Zimbabwe Library Association (ZimLA)				
Librarians within the same library				
Librarians from other academic libraries, special libraries and so forth				
Information technology (IT) personnel in the college/university				
IT personnel outside the college/university				
Developers of computer software and hardware e.g. developers of websites, integrated library systems, programmers and so forth				
Social networks sites e.g. learner groups' Facebook, Twitter, blogs and so forth, sites				

Other, please specify

(ii.) Please justify whom among the stakeholders listed in Item 17 (i.), is the most important.

Section D: THE COMPETENCIES NEEDED FOR BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

18. The International Board of Standards for Training, Performance, and Instruction (IBSTPI ®) is an organization that has been developing and validating standards for professionals in the field of instructional design training and performance.

(i.) Which of the following *essential* instructional design competencies from the IBSTPI ®, do you use to integrate teaching, learning and research activities into your professional practice of librarianship?

Instructional design competencies to integrate teaching, learning and research into the practice of librarianship				
Please tick where appropriate				
Use of instructional design competencies	**None of the time**	**Some of the time**	**Most of the time**	**All the time**
Communicating effectively in visual, oral and written form				
Updating and improving knowledge, skills, and attitudes pertaining to the instructional design process and related fields				
Identifying and responding to ethical, legal, and political implications of instructional design in the workplace				
Identifying and describing the target population and environmental characteristics				
Selecting and using analysis techniques for determining instructional content				

Analysing the characteristics of existing and emerging technologies and their potential use for teaching, learning and research				
Using an instructional design and development process appropriate for a given project				
Organizing instructional courses to be searchable and or accessible				
Designing instructional interventions such as course/subject guides and tutorials				
Selecting or modifying existing instructional materials				
Developing instructional materials for the community				
Revising instructional and non-instructional solutions based on data collected from the community				

Other, please specify

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(ii.) Which of the essential instructional design competencies you indicated in Item 18 (i.) are common amongst academic librarians at your institution?

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19 (i.) Which of the following information technology competencies do you use to integrate teaching, learning and research into your professional practice of librarianship?

Information technology competencies to integrate teaching, learning and research into the practice of librarianship				
Please tick where appropriate				
Use of information technology competencies	**None of the time**	**Some of the time**	**Most of the time**	**All the time**
Electronically disseminating printed material through eLearning platforms such as Sakai, Moodle, SubjectsPlus and so forth				
Teaching faculty/academics how to use eLearning platforms				
Developing interactive presentations and tutorials using PowerPoint, Prezi, GoAnimate and so forth				
Coding websites and mobile apps and the ability to read programming languages such as HTML, JAVA, PHP codes, amongst others				
Providing cloud-based eLearning through applications (such as Google Drive, One Drive, SubjectsPlus and so forth) for educational purposes				
Knowledge of eResources for teaching, learning and research support				

Other, please specify

(ii.) Which of the information technology skills you indicated in Item 19 (i.) are you most competent in?

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(iii.) Why do you believe you lack some of the information technology skills listed in Item 19 (i.)?

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20 (i.) What methods do you use to gain competencies (knowledge and skills) in instructional design and information technology

Methods to gain competencies in instructional design and information technology				
Please tick where appropriate				
Frequency of methods to gain competencies and skills	**None of the time**	**Some of the time**	**Most of the time**	**All the time**
I learn through training in workshops and seminars organized by my employers				
I learn through training in workshops and seminars outside my organization				
I learn through webinars provided online				
I learn through classes available in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on the Internet				
I learn through mentors and supervisors				
I read research and other publications				

I learn through a series of trial and error				
I have taken additional courses or studies through distance education				
I have taken additional courses or studies through formal face-to-face learning				

Other, please specify

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(ii.) Please justify why you selected the methods indicated in Item 20 (i.), to gain competencies in instructional design and information technology

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Section E: SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THAT RESULT IN BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

21(i.) Please indicate events which are occurring at your workplace that are changing your work roles or that of your co-workers in the direction of blended librarianship

Significant events that result in blended librarianship			
Please tick where appropriate			
Weight of events that result in blended librarianship	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**

The domination of Google, Wikipedia, Amazon, and other online information sources			
The spread of emerging technologies that support teaching, learning and research activities			
The rise of distant learning, eLearning and other non-face-to face learning			
Pressure from communities to have the academic library in their conversations			
The rise of interdisciplinary work in academia			
Rapidly changing ICT hardware			
The academic librarian's involvement in grading learners for classroom assignments, information literacy skills training and so forth			
The rise of learning commons which integrate computers (hardware), software and research in academic libraries			

Other, please specify

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(ii.) Of the events, you identified in Item 21(i), please select one which you believe is the most significant in your work roles. Why do you think so?

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22 (i.) What do you think the scope of academic librarianship would look like in the next 5-10 years?

(ii.) Where do you see yourself in academic librarianship in the next 5-10 years?

23. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to share regarding the subject of this study?

Thanks for your participation

Appendix 10: Interview guide for academic librarians

A phenomenological study of experiences in blended librarianship among academic librarians in Zimbabwe with special reference to selected higher education institutions

Preamble:

My name is Israel Mbekezeli Dabengwa and I am an MPhil (Research) student in the Library and Information Studies Centre at the University of Cape Town. My study is being supervised by Associate Professor J. Raju from the University of Cape Town. Thank you for taking time to participate in this interview.

The primary objective of the study was to explore the shared experiences of blended librarianship to find out how effectively Zimbabwean academic librarians adhere to their dynamic roles and functions, and how they are perceived in the university. A blended librarian is defined by Bell and Shank (2007: 3) as "an academic librarian who combines the traditional skill-sets of librarianship with the information technologist's hardware/software skills, and the instructional or educational designer's ability to apply technology appropriately in the teaching and learning process".

As an academic librarian who is involved in teaching and demonstrating information technology (IT) tools and in instructional design (through participation in curriculum design and eLearning platforms), I have invited you to participate in this interview. The interview will be recorded, using a smart recording device (place device on the table). The interview may take about **40 minutes** to complete. Your participation is strictly voluntary, and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. You are free not to respond to any of the questions that you may feel uncomfortable to respond to. There is no compensation for participating nor is there any known risk. Please state that you agree or disagree to take part in the interview (interviewee says I do hereby agree/disagree to take part in the study).

Thank you for taking time to participate in this interview towards my MPhil (Research) in Library and Information Studies at the University of Cape Town. The information gathered in this study will be used to establish a common pattern on how the practices of academic librarians in Zimbabwe are bridging the theory-practice divide in LIS. By so doing, solutions may be found on how to reduce fragmentation in the LIS profession. After the study has been concluded, I will share the findings of the study to your institution.

Any information that you provide this study, and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. To ensure that all information remains anonymous for reporting purposes, please do not include your name or anyone else's in our conversation.

Section A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Tell me briefly about your work at (name of the academic library)?

a) What is your formal job title?

b) Is Library and Information Science the qualifying degree for the position that you hold?

c) Have you held any job prior to joining the (name of the academic library)?

d) How has your previous job influenced you in your current job position?

Section B: ESTABLISHING THE ADOPTION OF BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

Instructional design roles

2. What tasks do you conduct that are related to teaching, learning, influencing curricula or grading students?

a) Are the skills you impart for finding information in a library or similar platforms, linked to any identified needs in your user communities? Why do you say so?

b) Which courses/user communities have benefited most from your participation in the teaching, learning, influencing curricula or grading student's activities? Why do you say so?

Information technologist roles

3. What kind of technologies do you teach in your user communities?

a) What kind of assessments do you conduct prior to teaching any technologies?

b) What have you found about your user community's technology needs?

4. Have you followed any systematic problem-solving procedures when conducting any training for a subject field?

OTHER DUTIES WHICH ARE BLENDED

5. Please provide any examples of activities that you are responsible for, which are outside the scope of your normal job description?

a) Why have you taken on these activities?

Section C: THE INTERPRETIVE REPERTOIRES OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS

6. You have given me some background information about the work you do at (name of the academic library). From what you have said about your work, do you think you are a blended librarian?

a) On a scale of 1-5, one being the lowest and five the highest, how would you rate your performance as a blended librarian?

b) Are you able to balance your role as an academic librarian and as well as the duties that cut across curriculum design and teaching ICTs in your user communities?

c) How are you able to balance these roles?

7. Do you believe that to be an effective blended librarian, you must be a subject librarian (that is conducting liaison and communicating on subjects with faculty and students)?

a) Are there any other models besides subject librarianship and blended librarianship that you believe may be more effective in delivering teaching, learning and research activities to meet the needs of your user community? If so, why do think so?

8. How are academic librarians perceived by lecturers and students in your college/university?

9. Do you believe academic librarians would be more effective at delivering teaching in a classroom or in an eLearning environment if they have formal recognition such as faculty status? Why you do think so?

10. Please tell me about a recent negative situation (if any) that discouraged you or any of your colleagues in the library from meeting the teaching, learning, and research roles of your job/s.

a) What makes you perceive these issues as being of concern?

11. Do you believe that academic librarians would be more successful at delivering teaching, learning and research activities to their user communities when they collaborate with other stakeholders?

a) Who do you think academic librarians should collaborate with?

b) Please explain who among the stakeholders you have mentioned, is the most important.

12. Do you believe academic librarians can take on roles like those of teaching/academic staff, for example, teaching in a classroom or in an eLearning environment? Please explain your position.

13. In your current position at your library, where do you see opportunities to work more closely with faculty and students to help them learn how to use library technologies more effectively?

Section D: THE COMPETENCIES NEEDED FOR BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

14. Which instructional design competencies (knowledge and skills) do you think academic librarians need to be effective at integrating teaching, learning and research into their practice?

a) Which of the instructional design competencies that you mentioned are common amongst academic librarians at your institution?

b) I see you mentioned that an effective blended librarian should have (list of competencies). Are there any reasons why you think the competencies you have listed, are quite necessary?

15. Which competencies do you believe academic librarians need to be effective at integrating information technology into teaching, learning and research in your user community?

a) Which of the information technology skills that you mentioned, are you most competent in?

b) Why do believe you lack some of the information technology competencies which you mentioned?

16. What methods do you use to gain competencies (knowledge and skills) for instructional design and information technology use? Why do you use these methods?

Section E: SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THAT RESULT IN BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

17. Over the past decade there have been several changes in academic libraries. Which global and localised actions do you think are responsible for your integration of blended librarianship into your user community? Why is this so?

a) Of the events you identified, select one which you believe is the most significant in your work roles. Why do you think so?

18. What do you believe the scope of academic librarianship would look like in the next 5-10 years?

a) Where do you see yourself in academic librarianship in the next 5-10 years?

19. Do you have any additional comments relating to this study that you would like to share?

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your contributions have been very helpful.

Date: Time interview began: Time Ended:

Appendix 11: Interview guide for members of library boards

A phenomenological study of experiences in blended librarianship among academic librarians in Zimbabwe with special reference to selected higher education institutions

Preamble:

My name is Israel Mbekezeli Dabengwa and I am an MPhil (Research) student in the Library and Information Studies Centre at the University of Cape Town. My study is being supervised by Associate Professor J. Raju from the University of Cape Town. Thank you for taking time to participate in this interview.

The primary objective of the study was to explore the shared experiences of blended librarianship to find out how effectively Zimbabwean academic librarians adhere to their dynamic roles and functions, and how they are perceived in the university. A blended librarian is defined by Bell and Shank (2007: 3) as "an academic librarian who combines the traditional skill-sets of librarianship with the information technologist's hardware/software skills, and the instructional or educational designer's ability to apply technology appropriately in the teaching and learning process".

As a member of the Library Board of an academic library whose librarians are involved in teaching and demonstrating information technology (IT) tools and in instructional design (through participation in curriculum design and eLearning platforms), I have invited you to participate in this interview. The interview will be recorded using a smart recording device (place device on the table). The interview may take about **40 minutes** to complete. Your participation is strictly voluntary, and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. There is no compensation for participating nor is there any known risk. Please state that you agree or disagree to take part in the interview (interviewee says I do hereby agree/disagree to take part in the study).

The information gathered in this study will be used to establish a common pattern on how the practices of academic librarians in Zimbabwe are bridging the theory-practice divide in LIS. By so doing, solutions may be found on how to reduce fragmentation in the LIS profession.

Any information that you provide this study, and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. To ensure that all information remains anonymous for reporting purposes, please do not include your name or anyone else's in our conversation.

Thank you for taking time to participate in this interview towards my MPhil (Research) in Library and Information Studies at the University of Cape Town.

Section A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Tell me briefly about your role on the Library Board at (name of the academic library)?

Section B: ESTABLISHING THE ADOPTION OF BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

Instructional design roles

2. What do you think about academic librarians' (name of the academic library) involvement in teaching, learning, influencing curricula or grading students?

a) Do you believe that the academic librarians at (name of the academic library) link their support activities for teaching, learning and research to any identified needs in their user communities? Why do you think so?

b) Which courses/user communities do believe have benefited most from academic librarians' participation in the teaching, learning, influencing curricula or grading students' activities?

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIST ROLES

3. What kind of technologies are taught by academic librarians in your user communities?

a) Do you believe that academic librarians should conduct assessments of user technology needs prior to teaching the technologies? Why do you think so?

b) What have you found about your user community's technology needs and the way they take up technology?

4. Can you tell me the steps that are followed by academic librarians in the (name of the academic library), to solve problems when conducting any training or when providing information assistance in any subject field?

a) Is it possible for academic librarians at (name of the academic library), to follow any systematic problem-solving procedures when providing information and technology assistance in any subject field?

OTHER DUTIES WHICH ARE BLENDED

5. Please provide any examples of activities that academic librarians are responsible for, which are outside the scope of their normal job description?

a) Why do you think they have taken on these activities?

Section C: THE INTERPRETIVE REPERTOIRES OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS

6. You have given me some background information about the work of academic librarians in the (name of the academic library). From what you have said about their work, do you think there are any blended librarians among them?

a) On a scale of 1-5, one being the lowest and five the highest, how would you rate your performance as a blended librarian (delivering teaching, learning, and research activities that meet the needs of their user communities)?

b) Are the academic librarians at NUST able to balance their traditional roles as well as the duties that cut across curriculum design and teaching ICTs in your user communities?

7. Do you believe subject librarianship (that is conducting liaison and communicating on subjects with faculty and students) is the most effective mode for delivering teaching, learning and research activities to meet the needs of user communities?

a) Are there any other models besides subject librarianship and blended librarianship that you believe may be more effective in delivering teaching, learning and research activities to meet the needs of their user communities? If so, why do think so?

8. How are academic librarians perceived by lecturers and students in your college/university?

9. Do you believe academic librarians would be more effective at delivering teaching in a classroom or in an eLearning environment if they have formal recognition such as faculty status? Why do you think so?

1**0.** Please tell me about a recent negative situation (if any) that discouraged academic librarians at the (name of the academic library) from meeting the teaching, learning, and research roles of their job/s.

a) What makes you perceive these issues as being of concern?

11. Do you believe that academic librarians would be more successful at delivering teaching, learning and research activities to their user communities when they collaborate with other stakeholders?

a) Who do you think academic librarians should collaborate with?

b) Please explain who among the stakeholders you have mentioned, is the most important.

12. Do you believe academic librarians can take on roles like those of teaching/academic staff, for example, teaching in a classroom or in an eLearning environment? Please explain your position.

a) Do you think they will be able to balance their present roles as academic librarians and as well as duties that cut across curriculum design and teaching ICTs in their user communities?

Section D: THE COMPETENCIES NEEDED FOR BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

13. Which competencies (that is, knowledge and skills) do you think academic librarians need to be effective at integrating teaching, learning and research into their professional practice of librarianship?

a) Which of the instructional design competencies that you mentioned are common amongst academic librarians at your institution?

b) I see you mentioned that an effective blended librarian should have (list of competencies). Are there any reasons why you think the competencies you have listed, are quite necessary?

14. Which competencies do you believe academic librarians at the (name of the academic library) need to be effective at integrating information technology into teaching, learning and research in their user communities?

a) Which of the information technology skills that you mentioned, are academic librarians at the (name of the academic library) most competent in?

b) Why do believe some academic librarians at the (name of the academic library) lack some of the information technology competencies which you mentioned?

15. What methods do academic librarians at the (name of the academic library) use to gain competencies (knowledge and skills) for instructional design and information technology use? Why do they use these methods?

16. In your current position as a Library Board member, where do you see opportunities for (name of academic library) to work more closely with faculty and students to help them learn how to use library technologies more effectively?

Section E: SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THAT RESULT IN BLENDED LIBRARIANSHIP

17. Over the past decade there have been several changes in academic libraries. Which global and localised actions do you think are responsible for the integration of teaching, learning and research into user communities? Why is this so?

Of the events you identified, select one which you believe is the most significant among academic librarians at the (name of the academic library). Why do you think so?

18. What do you believe the scope of academic librarianship would look like in the next 5-10 years?

Where do you see yourself in academic librarianship in the next 5-10 years?

19. Do you have any additional comments relating to this study that you would like to share.

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your contributions have been very helpful.

Date: **Time interview began:** **Time Ended:**
